

Margalit Finkelberg
Homer and Early Greek Epic

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Margalit Finkelberg

Homer and Early Greek Epic

Collected Essays

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To the memory of Mark W. Edwards (1929–2016)

Preface

This volume contains a collection of articles on Homeric subjects I published between 1986 and 2018. They fall into four closely interlinked sets of topics: Homer's formulaic diction, Greek epic tradition, Homer's historical background, text and transmission of the Homeric poems. Within each of the four parts thus conceived the articles are arranged chronologically, so that their order reflects the process of consolidation of several overarching arguments around which much of my work on Homer has revolved: the systemic tension between traditional diction and the individual poet (Part 1), the special position of the Homeric poems within Greek epic tradition (Part 2), the multiplicity of historical backgrounds of Homer (Part 3), and the decisive role played by Homer's canonical status in the history of the text and transmission of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Part 4). It goes without saying that not every article in the book can be subsumed under such categorization—what is at issue here are, rather, the leitmotifs, the persistent questions to which I have been coming back over the years.

This collection only concerns Homeric subjects in the strict sense: my publications addressing other topics, whenever they emerge in the course of the discussion, appear in the Bibliography; also appear in the Bibliography several forthcoming articles on Homer which for obvious reasons could not be incorporated into this volume. Some articles are reprinted in their original form, others have been slightly revised, abridged or updated to eliminate repetitions, infelicities of language and occasional mistakes. Since in a collection of essays addressing different aspects of the same cultural phenomenon a certain amount of overlapping is unavoidable, I have added cross-references to help the reader to navigate between the book's four sections.

I am grateful to the publishers of the articles included in this volume for having granted permission to reprint them; the original venues of publication have been duly acknowledged. My special thanks go to Professor Antonios Rengakos, Editor of the Trends in Classics series, for suggesting that I assemble my Homeric papers within a single volume. I dedicate it to the memory of Professor Mark W. Edwards, a Homerist, friend, and mentor. I miss him dearly.

Margalit Finkelberg
Tel Aviv, July 2019

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List of Abbreviations

A&A	<i>Antike und Abendland</i>
AASOR	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
AClass	<i>Acta Classica</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AS	<i>Ancient Society</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
BMCR	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i>
CA	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CAH	<i>Cambridge Classical History</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz (eds.). 1934. <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> . 5th edn. Berlin.
G&R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
Ebeling	H. Ebeling. 1885. <i>Lexicon Homericum</i> . Leipzig.
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
IJCT	<i>International Journal of the Classical Tradition</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
LfrgE	B. Snell and H. Erbse (eds.). 1955–2010. <i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> . Göttingen.
LSJ	H.G. Liddel, R. Scott, H.S. Jones and R. McKenzie (eds.). 1996. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th edn with Revised Supplement by P.G.W. Glare. Oxford.
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
MHV	A. Parry (ed.). 1971. <i>The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry</i> . Oxford.
NYRB	<i>New York Review of Books</i>
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
OT	<i>Oral Tradition</i>
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
RE	G. Wissowa et al. (eds.). 1859–1980. <i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Stuttgart.
RÉG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
RPh	<i>Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes</i>
SCHS 1954	<i>Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs</i> . Collected by M. Parry and edited by A.B. Lord. Vol. 1. Cambridge, MA
SCHS 1974	<i>Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs</i> . Collected by M. Parry and edited by A.B. Lord. Vol. 3. Cambridge, MA
SCI	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>

XIV — List of Abbreviations

<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
West	M.L. West (ed.). 2003. <i>Greek Epic Fragments</i> . Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

List of the original publication venues

1. 'Is KLEOS AFQITON a Homeric Formula?' *CQ* 36 (1986) 1–5.
2. 'Homer's View of the Epic Narrative: some formulaic evidence', *CP* 82 (1987) 135–38.
3. 'A note on Some Metrical Irregularities in Homer', *CP* 83 (1988) 206–11.
4. 'Formulaic and Nonformulaic Elements in Homer', *CP* 84 (1989) 179–97.
5. 'Homer, a Poet of an Individual Style', *SCI* 16 (1997) 1–8.
6. 'Oral Theory and the Limits of Formulaic Diction', *OT* 19/2 (2004) 236–52.
7. 'More on KLEOS AFQITON', *CQ* 57 (2007) 341–50.
8. 'Late Features in the Speeches of the *Iliad*', in Ø. Andersen and D.T.T. Haug (eds.). *Relative Chronology in Early Greek Epic Poetry*. Cambridge (2012) 80–95.
9. 'Oral Formulaic Theory and the Individual Poet', in F. Montanari, A. Rengakos and Ch. Tsagalis (eds.). *Homeric Contexts. Neoanalysis and the Interpretation of Oral Poetry*. Berlin/Boston (2012) 73–82.
10. 'Equivalent Formulae for Zeus in Their Traditional Context', in A.I. Cooper, J. Rau and M. Weiss (eds.). *Multi Nominis Grammaticus: Studies in Classical and Indo-European Linguistics in Honor of Alan J. Nussbaum on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*. Ann Arbor/New York (2013) 44–49.
11. 'The First Song of Demodocus', *Mnemosyne* 40 (1987) 128–32.
12. 'A Creative Oral Poet and the Muse', *AJP* 111 (1990) 293–303.
13. 'How Could Achilles' Fame Have Been Lost?' *SCI* 11 (1991/92) 22–37.
14. 'The Sources of *Iliad* 7', in H.M. Roisman and J. Roisman (eds.). *Essays on Homeric Epic. Colby Quarterly* 38/2 (2002) 151–61.
15. 'The End of the Heroic Age in Homer, Hesiod and the Cycle', *Ordia Prima* 3 (2004) 11–24.
16. 'Homer and His Peers: Neoanalysis, Oral Theory, and the Status of Homer', *Trends in Classics* 3 (2011) 197–208.
17. 'Meta-cyclic Epic and Homeric poetry', in M. Fantuzzi and Ch. Tsagalis (eds.). *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception. A Companion*. Cambridge (2015) 126–38.
18. 'The Formation of the Homeric Epics', in F.-H. Mutschler (ed.). *Singing the World. The Homeric Epics and the Chinese Book of Songs. Foundational Texts Compared*. Newcastle upon Tyne (2018) 15–38.
19. 'Royal Succession in Heroic Greece', *CQ* 41 (1991) 303–16.
20. 'Odysseus and the Genus "Hero"', *G&R* 42 (1995) 1–14.
21. 'Patterns of Human Error in Homer', *JHS* 115 (1995) 15–28.
22. '*Timē* and *Aretē* in Homer', *CQ* 48 (1998) 15–28.
23. 'Homer and the Bottomless Well of the Past'. A review article of I. Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus* (Berkeley 1998), *SCI* 21 (2002) 243–50.
24. 'Greece in the Eighth Century BCE and the Renaissance Phenomenon', in Sh. Shaked (ed.). *Genesis and Regeneration. Essays on Conceptions of Origins*. Jerusalem (2005) 62–76.
25. 'Ajax's Entry in the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women', *CQ* 38 (1988) 31–41.
26. 'The *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the Problem of Multiformity in Oral and Written Tradition', *CP* 95 (2000) 1–11.
27. 'Homer as a Foundation Text', in M. Finkelberg and G.G. Stroumsa (eds.). *Homer, the Bible and Beyond: Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World*. Leiden/Boston (2003) 75–96.

28. 'She Turns About in the Same Spot and Watches for Orion: ancient criticism and exegesis of *Od.* 5.274 = *Il.* 18.488', *GRBS* 44 (2004) 231–44.
29. 'Regional Texts and the Circulation of Books: the case of Homer', *GRBS* 46 (2006) 231–48.
30. 'Canonising and Decanonising Homer: Reception of the Homeric Poems in Antiquity and Modernity', in M. Niehoff (ed.). *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*. Leiden/Boston (2012) 15–28.
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Part I: **Language and Diction**

1 Is ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ a Homeric Formula?

Since being brought to light in 1853 by Adalbert Kuhn, the fact that the Homeric expression κλέος ἄφθιτον has an exact parallel in the Veda has played a pivotal role in formulating the hypothesis that Greek epic poetry is of Indo-European origin.¹ Yet only with the emergence of Milman Parry's theory of the formulaic character of Homeric composition did it become possible to test the antiquity of κλέος ἄφθιτον on the internal grounds of Homeric diction.²

It is generally agreed that the conservative character of oral composition entails a high degree of correlation between the antiquity of a Homeric expression and its formulaic character. In other words, although not all Homeric formulae are necessarily of ancient origin, it is nevertheless in the formulaic stock of the epic diction that archaic and backward-looking expressions should be sought.³ Consequently, demonstration that κλέος ἄφθιτον (as well as other Homeric expressions with Vedic cognates)⁴ is a Homeric formula would constitute valuable evidence for its origin in Indo-European heroic poetry. Strangely enough, however, as Parry's analysis won the recognition of scholars, κλέος ἄφθιτον was identified as a Homeric formula simply because of its agreement with the Vedic *śráva(s) ... ākṣitam*.⁵ Yet examination of κλέος ἄφθιτον from the internal standpoint of the Greek epic casts serious doubts on the formulaic and traditional character of this Homeric expression.

1

The technical criterion on the basis of which a Homeric expression is considered a formula is repetition. Though opinions as to the minimum number of repetitions needed to identify a given expression as a formula vary,⁶ it is clear that in cases where the given expression is unique, its formulaic nature cannot be taken

1 See Wackernagel 1943; reprinted together with other important articles on Indo-European poetry in Schmitt 1968, 83–101. See also Schmitt 1967; M. West 1973; Nagy 1974; Floyd 1980.

2 For Parry's work see *MHV*; for a discussion of the essentials of oral–formulaic theory see below, ch. 18, 186–88.

3 Cf. Webster 1956; Page 1959, 222–58; Hoekstra 1965, 24–25, M. West 1973, 187; Horrocks 1980, 5.

4 Such as κλέος εὐρύ, μέγα κλέος, κλέα ἀνδρῶν *e.a.*: for the full list see Schmitt 1967, 71ff.

5 See, e.g., Schmitt 1967, 65–66; Nagy 1974, 142, 229–30, and *passim*; Floyd 1980, 133.

6 I follow Hainsworth 1968, 42, in holding that any expression that occurs at least twice in Homer should be accounted a formula.

for granted.⁷ Since κλέος ἄφθιτον occurs only once in Homer, comparative considerations by themselves do not afford sufficient evidence for the formulaic character of this Homeric expression. It is against the broader background of Homeric diction that examination of κλέος ἄφθιτον in Homer must proceed.

What are the conditions the satisfaction of which makes it probable that a given unique expression is a formula? Firstly, we must determine whether the existence of such a formula is functionally justified. It is generally agreed that the existence of a formula is justified in that it is a metrical and semantic unit allowing the oral poet to express a given idea under given metrical conditions. Consequently, the existence of two or more equivalent formulae would be functionally redundant from the point of view of the oral technique, and the fact is that though the poet may well replace his formulae with expressions created *ad hoc* as he sees fit, the replacement of one formula with another is a rare practice.⁸ It follows, then, that if κλέος ἄφθιτον has no formulaic equivalent, that is, if it cannot be replaced with a well-established Homeric formula, the possibility that it is an underrepresented formula would considerably increase.

Two Homeric expressions can be considered equivalent when they are metrical and semantically interchangeable. If κλέος ἄφθιτον ('imperishable fame') is taken as a self-contained unit, its only semantic equivalent would be ἄσβεστον κλέος ('inextinguishable fame') of the *Odyssey*.⁹ But is κλέος ἄφθιτον a self-contained unit?

The combination of words κλέος ἄφθιτον is found at *Iliad* 9.413, in Achilles' great speech:

⁷ Unless of course one claims that all Homeric expressions are formulae. That this is hardly probable was convincingly argued in Hainsworth 1964, 155–64, and Hoekstra 1965, 15–16, 24. See also below, ch. 4 and ch. 9, 96–98.

⁸ Cf. Page 1959, 224–25; Hainsworth 1968, 7–8. Actually, the number of so-called 'equivalent formulae' varies with the criteria applied for discerning the reasons underlying the duplication. The question has not yet been sufficiently explored (but see Janko 1981 and below, chs. 7 and 10), but it is reasonable to suppose that Homer's motives for replacing one formula with another were much more subtle than many are ready to admit. The majority of the equivalent formulae are expressions which are especially current in Homer's usage, so it is quite possible that prevention of monotony furnished the oral poet with sufficient justification for retaining two mutually interchangeable formulae, cf. Hainsworth 1968, 9–10. Similarly, such ostensibly equivalent formulae as βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη and θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη, attesting as they do two different attributes of the goddess, might have been considered semantically complementary and therefore functionally justified, as was demonstrated for the pair πολυφλοῖσβοιο θαλάσσης and θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο in Gray 1947, 111.

⁹ *Od.* 4.584, 7.333; ἄφθιτος and ἄσβεστος are not metrical equivalents as was mistakenly held by B. Mader in *LfgE* s.v. ἄφθιτος.

εἰ μὲν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι,
 ὤλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται·
 εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ' ἵκωμι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
 ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν
 ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ' ὤκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχέιη.

'If I abide here and fight about the Trojans' city, then lost is my return, but my fame will be imperishable; but if I go home to my dear native land, then lost is my noble fame, but my life will long endure, nor will the issue of death soon reach me'.¹⁰

The first conclusion that follows from examining κλέος ἄφθιτον within its context is that it cannot be identified as a noun-epithet combination for the simple reason that, in the clause κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται, ἄφθιτον is not the attribute of κλέος but its predicate (the predicative adjective).¹¹ Hence, not κλέος ἄφθιτον ('imperishable fame') but κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται ('fame will be imperishable') is a self-contained semantic unit in Homer.

Thus, we must try to correlate κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται, and not just κλέος ἄφθιτον, with other Homeric expressions in which immortality or something to that effect is predicated of fame. Whether the predicate is adjectival or verbal is not significant here. This gives us the following group – (1) 'fame will never be lost' (κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται *Il.* 2.325, 7.91; *Od.* 24.196); (2) 'fame should be inextinguishable' (ἄσβεστον κλέος εἴη, *Od.* 4.584, 7.333), and (3) 'fame reaches unto heaven' (κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει, *Il.* 8.325; *Od.* 9.20).¹² Of the three expressions, ἄσβεστον κλέος εἴη is shaped differently from κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται and therefore cannot replace it in the hexameter, and κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει, though shaped like κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται and employed in the same metrical position (after the fourth-

¹⁰ *Il.* 9.412–16, transl. A. Lang, W. Leaf, E. Myers, slightly adapted.

¹¹ Though μοι at the beginning of the apodosis refers to both its clauses, this does not turn ἄφθιτον into the attribute of κλέος (μοι ... κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται 'I shall have imperishable fame'): here, μοι is the dative of interest, not of possession (μοι at *Il.* 9.413 appears in P. Chantraine's list of examples of the dative of interest in Homer; see Chantraine 1953, 71). On Homeric background for the use of the dative of interest with predicative adjectives is see Vivante 1982, 109: 'Whereas the noun-epithet phrase is self-contained, the predicate is quite relative to the context. ... the quality [of predicates – M.F.] needs its immediate term of reference, needs to be strongly connected with the occasion; it is not expressed as an absolute endowment standing above the passing action. Hence the "dative of interest" which we so often find with such predicates...'

¹² Related expressions are αἰεὶ /... κλέος ἔσσεται ἐσθλόν *Od.* 24.93f., which need not be taken into account here because of its uniqueness and the separation between two verses; μέγα (μέγιστον) ὑπουράνιον κλέος εἴη (ἐστί) *Il.* 10.212; *Od.* 9.264, which is not fixed and is too long; and κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἵκανε *Od.* 8.74, 19.108, which is an expanded version of κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει. Cf. also *Il.* 7.451, 458, 17.232; *Od.* 18.255, 19.128.

foot caesura), cannot replace it in the hexameter because of the difference in the tenses.¹³ However, κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται is not only shaped like κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται and employed in the same metrical position, but also replaces it in the hexameter. Thus,

(after the fourth-foot caesura) κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται 3 times
κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται once.

The fact that κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται is found three times in Homer makes a good case for identifying it as a Homeric formula for expressing the idea of the immortality of fame after the fourth-foot caesura, precisely the metrical position in which κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται occurs only once. Since κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται at *Iliad* 9.413 may be replaced with a well-established Homeric formula, its existence as a formula is functionally redundant. In view of this, κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται may be counted a formula with no more reason than any other unique expression in Homer.

2

Though unique expressions are generally presumed to belong to the latest stage of composition, it is at the same time possible that some of them belonged to the most ancient layers in the formulaic stock of Greek epic diction, and were supplanted with more recent formulae in all other relevant contexts.¹⁴ And, though the frequency with which κλέος ἄφθιτον emerges in post-Homeric diction somewhat diminishes the relevance of this option for this particular expression,¹⁵ it nevertheless deserves testing. To argue for the antiquity of a given Homeric expression, we check whether it excludes features which may indicate that it was created by analogy with other Homeric expressions. If the expression contains certain peculiarities of language, if its meaning is obsolete, if its words are of re-

¹³ Though neither ἄσβεστον κλέος εἶη nor κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει is formulated in the future indicative, the difference is only crucial with regard to the latter. In the former εἶη may be replaced by ἔσται without causing any metrical change; however, putting κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει in the future tense would involve a change in the metrics, because the epic future of ἵκω is ἵξομαι.

¹⁴ See Gray 1947, 116; Page 1959, 228; Hainsworth 1964, 163–64 and 1968, 40; Hoekstra 1965, 13–14.

¹⁵ After Homer κλέος ἄφθιτον, with or without being accompanied by forms of εἶναι, occurs in the inscription from Krisa, Schwyz no. 316; [Hes.] fr. 70. 5 M–W; Sappho fr. 44.4 L–P; Ibycus fr. 1. 47 Page; and Ion of Chios, fr. 7.3 D.; see Schmitt 1967, 62–63; Floyd 1980 and below, ch. 7.

stricted usage—in short, if no parallel can be drawn between it and other expressions in Homer, the possibility that it is an ancient one is considerable.¹⁶ Yet examination of κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται in the broader Homeric context does in fact point to formulaic associations on the basis of which it might have been built.

Thus, ἄφθιτον (‘imperishable’) is part of the Homeric formula for precious objects of divine origin ἄφθιτον / ἄφθιτα αἰεὶ (‘imperishable forever’), whose fixed position at the end of the hexameter (4 times in the *Iliad*) makes it ideally compatible with the term κλέος when placed after the fourth-foot caesura.¹⁷ In addition, the fact that ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ is regularly applied by Homer to material objects indicates that its application to so incorporeal an entity as fame must have been prompted by the analogy.¹⁸ Thus,

(after the fourth-foot caesura)	κλέος οὐποτ’ ὀλεῖται	3 times
~ ~	ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ	4 times
	κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται	once.

Combination of κλέος with forms of the verb εἶναι at the verse-end is an established Homeric usage, and the expression κλέος εἶναι / ἔστιν / εἴη, found in Homer four times, may with every right be identified as a Homeric formula.¹⁹ In order to be transformed into κλέος ... ἔσται after the fourth-foot caesura, the κλέος

¹⁶ Cf. Page 1959, 226.

¹⁷ *Il.* 2.46, 186 (applied to the sceptre of Agamemnon), 13.22 (the palace of Poseidon), 14.238 (the throne promised by Hera to Hypnos). As Parry demonstrated in *‘Les Formules et la metrique d’Homere’* (= ‘Homeric formulae and Homeric metre’, *MHV* 198–99), association of the formula with this particular metrical position was strong enough to cause a metrical fault at *Il.* 13.22. Note that ἄφθιτον at *Il.* 9.413 is the only instance in Homer of the adjective occurring in its fixed position without being followed by αἰεὶ.

¹⁸ When used alone and not in its fixed position (three times in the fourth and once in the first foot), ἄφθιτος is applied to the golden wheel-rim of Hera’s chariot (*Il.* 5.724), to the palace of Hephaestus (*Il.* 18.370), to the marvellous grapevines on the Island of the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.133), and to the plans (μήδεα) of Zeus. That only two out of the nine cases in which ἄφθιτος is found in Homer, with or without αἰεὶ, fall into the sphere of incorporeal objects (κλέος and μήδεα), indicates that the concrete associations of the term must have been the original ones; at the same time, the fact that its application to incorporeal entities sharply increases in post-Homeric poetry seems to entail that the term’s meaning evolved from concrete to abstract. The development of the term is so understood by H. Ebeling (not yet influenced by the Indo-European hypothesis!) in his *Lexicon Homericum* s.v. ἄφθιτος (‘transfertur ad ea quae mente percipiuntur’); the same evolution of ἄφθιτος from the concrete to the abstract meaning is traced in Treu 1965, 10–15. However, in the article on ἄφθιτος in *LfgE*, B. Mader argues that the term underwent a peculiar evolution from the abstract to the concrete and again to the abstract, placing κλέος ἄφθιτον at the beginning of its semantic development. See also below, ch. 7.

¹⁹ *Il.* 10.212, 22.514; *Od.* 4.584, 9.264. See Nagy 1974, 105–106.

of this formula must simply have been brought back to the fourth foot, into the position preceded in the formula κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται.²⁰ Thus,

(after the fourth-foot caesura)	<u>κλέος</u> οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται	3 times
~ ~	<u>ἄφθιτον</u> αἰεὶ	4 times
~ ~ -	<u>κλέος εἶναι</u>	4 times
	<u>κλέος</u> ἄφθιτον <u>ἔσται</u>	once.

It is now apparent that κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται at *Iliad* 9.413 is related to three well-established Homeric formulae. Considering that it also includes a significant semantic innovation (adaptation of ἄφθιτον to an incorporeal entity) and is frequently encountered in post-Homeric diction, we must conclude that it is unlikely that this expression is an ancient formula.

3

Since it is neither indispensable nor traditional, κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται at *Iliad* 9.413 must be an *ad hoc* innovation evoked by its immediate context. We have seen that the expression is part of Achilles' account of the conditions under which his fame may or may not perish—if he stays at Troy his fame will be imperishable, and if he returns home his fame will be lost. The expression ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν ('my noble fame is lost') at the end of the sentence is obviously related to the formula κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται ('fame will never be lost'), which has not been employed in this passage. It might be suggested that in order to avoid the repetition of one and the same expression, the formula κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται was replaced with the innovative κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται at the beginning of the passage. Yet it seems that it is in the words preceding the new expression that the reasons which necessitated it can be found.

The words immediately preceding κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται are ὤλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ ('my return is lost, but ...'). If the formula κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται had been inserted here, it would have produced monotony within the verse, which would have run ὤλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται ('my return is lost, but my fame will never be lost'). To avoid this, a new expression was created, and the poet's formulaic associations at the moment of the composition determined that this expression would be κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται. Consequently, the formula κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται, which was not employed in its proper place, was evoked in the form ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν at the end of the sentence.

²⁰ This specific type of separation at the verse-end is described in Hainsworth 1968, 97.

2 Homer's View of the Epic Narrative: Some Formulaic Evidence

During the feast being held in his honour in the Land of the Phaeacians, Odysseus asks the Phaeacian singer Demodocus to sing the song of the Wooden Horse. He makes his request as follows:

αἶ κεν δὴ μοι ταῦτα κατὰ μοῖραν καταλέξῃς,
αὐτίκα καὶ πᾶσιν μυθήσομαι ἀνθρώποισιν,
ὥς ἄρα τοι πρόφρων θεὸς ὤπασε θέσπιν ἀοιδήν.

'If you recount (*katalexēis*) all this for me *kata moiran*, then I will tell the world forthwith how the god has blessed you ungrudgingly with the gift of inspired song'.¹

The poet's narrative is designated here by the verb καταλέγειν, 'to recount'. The verb is applied, though indirectly, once more to poetry in Alcinous' praise of Odysseus' narration of his adventures: μῦθον δ' ὥς ὅτ' ἀοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας (*Od.* 11.368). Now καταλέγειν is not an ordinary verb of speaking. It is an enumerative verb that joined the *verba dicendi* as a result of semantic evolution, and it still possesses clear enumerative associations in all the contexts in which it occurs.² In his study of καταλέγειν, Tilman Krischer has shown that in Homer this verb designates concrete and exact accounts that relate the subject 'point by point' and is applied only to the conveying of information; in view of this, he considers the application of the verb to poetry as a deviation unrepresentative of Homer's general idea of the epic song.³ However, Krischer's own evidence shows that the characteristic sense of καταλέγειν has much in common with the early Greek understanding of truth as conveyed by the words ἀληθής and ἀληθείη:⁴ this may well indicate that Homer applied the verb καταλέγειν to poetry because he conceived the epic narrative as just such a truthful and 'point-by-point' account of events. We can find evidence in favour of this suggestion in Homer's formulaic diction.

1 *Od.* 8.496–98, transl. W. Shewring, slightly modified.

2 See Fournier 1946, 58.

3 Krischer 1965, 168, 170.

4 Krischer 1965, 167–70.

1

Only the future and aorist of καταλέγειν are used in the epic, obviously because in these forms the third syllable of the verb is lengthened, giving it the shape υ υ – – suited to the hexameter. One of the regular positions of καταλέξει is at the verse-end, where it usually occurs as part of an expression that fills the entire second half of the verse. The combinations thus produced are as follows:

(after the trochaic caesura)	καὶ ἀτρεκέως καταλέξει	18 times
	μάλ' ἀτρεκέως καταλέξει	3 times
	ἀληθείην καταλέξει	7 times
	κατὰ μοῖραν καταλέξει	4 times
	ἐπισταμένως καταλέξει	once
	ἀριφραδέα καταλέξει	once
	εἰοκότα γὰρ καταλέξει	once
	ἀριθμήσας καταλέξει	once. ⁵

The καταλέξει-expressions are employed by Homer in the four following situations:

1. A request for information is expressed in the wholly formulaic line ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον (17 out of the 18 occurrences of καὶ ἀτρεκέως καταλέξει in Homer), once by ἀριθμήσας κατάλεξον (*Od.* 16.235) and once by ἄγε δὴ μοι πᾶσαν ἀληθείην κατάλεξον (*Il.* 24.407).
2. A forthcoming narration is announced three times by μάλ' ἀτρεκέως καταλέξω, once by καὶ ἀτρεκέως καταλέξω (*Od.* 24.123), once by εἰοκότα γὰρ καταλέξω (*Od.* 4.239) and four times by ἀληθείην καταλέξω.
3. A listener characterizes an account with the words ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας (*Od.* 11.368), ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας (*Od.* 23.225) and κατὰ μοῖραν κατέλεξας (*Od.* 3.331; cf. also *Il.* 19.186 and *Od.* 8.496).
4. A narrator characterizes his own account with either κατὰ μοῖραν κατέλεξα or ἀληθείην κατέλεξα (2 times each).

⁵ With καὶ ἀτρεκέως: *Il.* 10.384, 405; 24.380, 656; *Od.* 1.169, 206, 224; 4.486; 8.572; 11.140, 170, 370, 457; 15.383; 16.137; 24.123, 256, 287. With μάλ' ἀτρεκέως: *Il.* 10.413, 427; *Od.* 24.303. With ἀληθείην: *Il.* 24.407; *Od.* 7.297; 16.226; 17.108, 122 (v.l. κατὰ μοῖραν); 21.212; 22.420. With κατὰ μοῖραν: *Od.* 3.331; 8.496; 10.16; 12.35 (cf. also ἐν μοίρῃ γὰρ πάντα δίκαιο καὶ κατέλεξα at *Il.* 19.186). With ἐπισταμένως: *Od.* 11.368; ἀριφραδέα: *Od.* 23.225; εἰοκότα γὰρ: *Od.* 4.239; ἀριθμήσας: *Od.* 16.235.

Accordingly, the distribution of the καταλέξει-expressions in Homer can be represented as follows:⁶

- BEFORE: (1) request: καὶ ἀτρεκέως / ἀληθεῖν καταλέξον
 (2) announcement: μάλ' (καὶ) ἀτρεκέως / ἀληθεῖν καταλέξω
 AFTER: (3) listener: κατὰ μοῖραν / ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας
 (4) narrator: κατὰ μοῖραν / ἀληθεῖν κατέλεξα

We can see now that the terms qualifying καταλέξει at the end of the verse are abundant because they are specialized both semantically and metrically. Semantically, the expressions in question fall into two groups: ἀτρεκέως ('truly', 'exactly') and ἀληθεῖν ('truth') refer to the content of the account designated by the verb καταλέγειν; κατὰ μοῖραν ('in order', 'rightly') and ἐπισταμένως ('with knowledge', 'expertly') refer ostensibly to the way in which the account is delivered. Obviously, both the request for information (1) and the announcement of the forthcoming account (2) are appropriately expressed in terms referring to the content of what is to be narrated; terms referring to the manner or form of the narration are more suited to a listener who is characterizing an account the veracity of which he is not always able to attest (3). Note, however, that when such limitations are irrelevant, as they are when a narrator characterizes what he himself has narrated (4), ἀληθεῖν, referring to the content of the narration, and κατὰ μοῖραν, referring to the form in which it is presented, are used interchangeably.

Metrically, it is convenient for the poet to reserve for each of the situations in question two expressions that differ in their initial sounds: those beginning with a vowel are suited to the metrical conditions under which those beginning with a consonant cannot be employed, and vice versa. Clearly, this could only be possible if he thought that such terms were closely associated in their meanings. This is obviously the case with καὶ or μάλ' ἀτρεκέως and ἀληθεῖν (1 and 2), both of them denoting 'truth'. The expressions κατὰ μοῖραν and ἐπισταμένως (3) also—as far at least as the listener's assessment of a given account is concerned—might well be thought to converge on the same idea, with 'rightly' connoting 'expertly' and vice versa. However, a similar alternation between κατὰ μοῖραν and ἀληθεῖν

⁶ Among the unique expressions, only ἐπισταμένως καταλέξει follows the metrical and semantic regularities according to which καταλέξει is used in Homer. This is not so with the other unique expressions: εὐκότα γὰρ καταλέξω at *Od.* 4.239 has a peculiar syntactic structure; ἀριθμήσας κατάλεξον at *Od.* 16.235 takes the verb καταλέγειν in the strictly enumerative sense; and ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας at *Od.* 23.225, being part of a larger semantic unit (σῆματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας), cannot be taken as an independent expression.

(4), suggesting as it does that each expression connotes the other, calls for a closer examination of the semantic content of κατὰ μοῖραν in Homer.

2

In fact, κατὰ μοῖραν is metrically isomorphic with καὶ or μάλ' ἄτρεκέως, ἐπισταμένως, and ἀληθείην only when it occurs in combination with the verb καταλέξαι: in this combination alone does the word μοῖρα appear in its ancient form *μμοῖρα (μμ- < σμ-)⁷ and, being always followed by a consonant, give the expression κατὰ μοῖραν the metrical shape ∪ – – – ; in all other contexts—for example, in the formula κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες—κατὰ μοῖραν is shaped ∪ ∪ – ∪ . Examination of the two metrical shapes of κατὰ μοῖραν in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* shows that they differ from each other not only metrically but also semantically.

In its ancient form κατὰ *μμοῖραν, the expression κατὰ μοῖραν is applied to actions that have as their common semantic denominator the ordered succession in which they are performed.⁸ No ordered succession, however, is implied in the formula κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες and related expressions, which as a rule refer to single utterances (or, sometimes, acts) not subject to further differentiation.⁹ None of these expressions, usually rendered as 'you have said it rightly' (or, 'not rightly'), preserves κατὰ μοῖραν in its ancient form; the only cases in which κατὰ *μμοῖραν is applied to human speech are those in which it is combined with the verb καταλέγειν.¹⁰ In view of this, it seems reasonable to suppose that the meaning of κατὰ μοῖραν, which originally connoted ordered succession, evolved to connote 'rightly', and that only the phrase κατὰ μοῖραν shaped ∪ – – – preserves the original meaning of the expression together with its ancient metrical shape.¹¹

Thus, the two meanings of κατὰ μοῖραν, 'in order' and 'rightly', correspond to the expression's two metrical shapes: the phrase κατὰ μοῖραν shaped ∪ ∪ – ∪

7 On the history of the word μοῖρα see Chantraine 1968, s.v. μείρομαι. Cf. Monro 1882, 275–78; MHV 232.

8 Outfitting a ship (*Od.* 4.783, 8.54), milking sheep (*Od.* 9.245, 309, 342), cutting up a sacrificial animal (*Od.* 3.457), the advance of troops (*Il.* 16.367).

9 κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπες *Il.* 1.286, 8.146, 9.59, 10.169, 15.206, 23.626, 24.379; *Od.* 2.251, 7.227, 8.141 and 397, 13.385, 18.170, 20.37, 21.278, 22.486; μυθεῖται κατὰ μοῖραν *Od.* 17.580; ὅπως ... κατὰ μοῖραν ὑποκρίναιτο *Od.* 15.170. Cf. also *Od.* 9.352, 15.203.

10 Applied to Nestor's account of the events in the royal house of Argos (*Od.* 3.331), to Odysseus' accounts of his adventures to Aeolus (*Od.* 10.16) and to Circe (*Od.* 12.35), and to Demodocus' song of the Wooden Horse (*Od.* 8.496).

11 Note that the expression κατὰ κόσμον ('in order', 'duly') also underwent a similar semantic development; see Kerschensteiner 1962, 6.

means 'rightly' and the same phrase shaped $\sim - - -$ means 'in order', 'in turn'; for the kind of enumerative account implied by the verb καταλέγειν, 'to recount point by point' seems to be the most appropriate rendering of κατὰ μοῖραν καταλέξει in Homer.¹² It follows that when varying κατὰ μοῖραν and ἀληθείην before καταλέξει at verse-end, Homer had to choose whether he wished to say 'to recount point by point' or 'to recount the truth'. We saw above that his choice was actually determined by metrical conditions. At the same time, metrical conditions cannot be thought to constrain his meaning, because we clearly saw him varying speech-qualifications in an elaborate and subtle way. In view of this, and considering that the verb καταλέγειν itself connotes both ordered succession and truth, we should conclude that these two meanings were conceived by him as interdependent. That is to say, the ordered succession was regarded as the form of a truthful narration, and the truth as the content of a 'point-by-point' narrative succession.¹³ This conclusion can be further corroborated by the fact that the 'point-by-point' narrative succession may well function in Homer as a criterion of verification, as is the case with Alcinous' assessment of Odysseus' narration of his adventures. Not being in a position to attest the veracity of Odysseus' story, Alcinous can only judge it on the basis of indirect evidence (*Od.* 11.363–68): Odysseus does not look like a liar; shapeliness is on his words; his mind is noble; and, finally, he recounted his story expertly (ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας), 'like a singer'. 'Point-by-point' account of the events serves, therefore, as the final proof of the truthfulness of Odysseus' narration.

Since Homer meant poetry to deliver truth, and since he saw truth as consisting of properly ordered items, he would naturally have grasped the 'point-by-point' progression as the only form appropriate for the epic narrative. The same conclusion seems to follow from his use of κατὰ κόσμον at *Odyssey* 8.489. When Odysseus wants to praise Demodocus, he says that the Phaeacian bard sings of all that the Achaeans suffered at Troy 'in perfectly good order' (λίην ... κατὰ κόσμον); later on in the same speech the sense of the phrase κατὰ κόσμον is conveyed more specifically as follows: 'as if you had yourself been present or heard

¹² Level 1976, arrives at a similar conclusion: κατὰ μοῖραν in combination with καταλέγειν stands apart from the other expressions employing κατὰ μοῖραν in the context of human speech (the only context in which he examines them), in that it does not bear the meaning 'rightly'. He proposes rendering κατὰ μοῖραν καταλέξει as 'parler selon la portion de réalité qu'on a en soi' (p. 198).

¹³ Cf. Krischer 1965, 170–71; Verdenius 1983, 25; Macleod 1983, 5; Walsh 1984, 7.

the story from another' (*Od.* 8.491). From this we can infer that the 'order' of Demodocus' song is the order of the events as they took place.¹⁴ Moreover, Alcinous' assessment of Odysseus' narrative in terms of a 'point-by-point' narrative succession delivered by a singer (above), clearly implies that Homer not only thought of the epic song as a 'point-by-point' narrative succession but even found in this feature of epic song the pattern for all veracious narrative.

¹⁴ Cf. Webster 1939, 175; Lanata 1963, 12–13; Maehler 1963, 32; Krischer 1965, 171; Adkins 1972, 16–17; Verdenius 1983, 53; Macleod 1983, 5; Walsh 1984, 8; Finkelberg 1998, 124–29.

3 A Note on some Metrical Irregularities in Homer

In his *Les formules et la métrique d'Homere*, the study that complements *L'épithète traditionnelle*, Milman Parry argued that certain metrical irregularities occur in the Homeric poems because a traditional poet would always rather use a traditional expression—even if this would entail a metrical fault—than abandon the tradition for the sake of observing the so-called metrical rules.¹ This view of the poet's choice evidently proceeds from the assumption that a traditional poet uses a metrically irregular expression in a given context because that expression is the only option the tradition provides for this context. After Parry, this thesis has largely been taken for granted.² If, however, we examine the metrically irregular expressions with which Parry dealt, we find that his suppositions cannot account for all of them, for there are cases where the poet could have avoided the metrical fault not by inventing a new expression, but by using a different traditional one.

1

(1) Discussing two similar cases of hiatus, *Odyssey* 3.64 ὥς δ' αὐτως ἡρᾶτο Ὀδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός and *Odyssey* 16.48 ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἔπειτα Ὀδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός, Parry wrote: 'there were no formulae other than the ones we quoted to express, in the same portion of the line, the ideas "in the same way Telemachus prayed" and "Telemachus sat there"'.³ Such a formula does, however, exist: ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο, by introduction of which after the masculine caesura the same metrical difficulty is often resolved in the *Odyssey*.⁴ Thus the poet could have avoided hiatus in these cases as well by saying *ὥς δ' αὐτως ἡρᾶθ' ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο and ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἔπειθ' ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο.

(2) Commenting on the hiatus at *Iliad* 2.571 Ὀρνειὰς τ' ἐνέμοντο Ἀραιθυρέην τ' ἐρατεινήν, Parry remarked:

To enumerate the towns which sent troops to the war, the bards created, among other devices, one consisting in saying in the first half of the line 'who inhabited such and such a

¹ *MHV* 196, 237.

² See, e.g., Hoekstra 1965, 9–10; A. Parry 1971, xxviii–xxix; G.P. Edwards 1971, 90; Janko 1982, 33.

³ *MHV* 203.

⁴ Most commonly in the expression τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπ' ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχιο, see *Od.* 2.409, 18.405, 21.101; cf. also *Od.* 18.60, 21.130.

town', and in the second half, 'and such and such a town (or towns)'... But to make lines of this shape without metrical fault, the second half-line, expressing in the accusative case the idea 'and such and such a town', had to begin with a single consonant... But Ἀραιθυρέην does not lend itself to this device.⁵

Yet among the patterns that the poet uses to arrange the names of towns in the Catalogue of Ships there is one that allows him to divide the verse at the penthemimeral caesura and say, in the first half of the verse, 'who had such and such a town' instead of 'who inhabited such and such a town'.⁶ The poet could have formed *Iliad* 2.571 after this pattern, avoiding the metrical fault by saying *Ὀρνειάς τ' εἶχον καὶ Ἀραιθυρέην ἐρατεινήν.

(3) The expression τετελεσμένα ἦεν occurs at *Iliad* 18.4 (τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ δὴ τετελεσμένα ἦεν), a line which introduces Achilles' inner monologue: at the very moment when Antilochus arrives to announce Patroclus' death, Achilles recalls that his mother had once told him that 'the best of the Myrmidons' must fall at Troy while he himself was still alive, and he begins to have a premonition of Patroclus' end. Parry pointed out that the hiatus in τετελεσμένα ἦεν results from a modification of the formula τετελεσμένον ἔσται (or ἐστί), which is found seventeen times in Homer;⁷ but we can also regard it as having been caused by the juxtaposition of this formula with the formula τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ...⁸ But *Iliad* 18.4 is not the only Homeric line to combine two expressions bearing these meanings: compare *Iliad* 2.36 τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ ῥ' οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον and *Odyssey* 2.156 ὄρμηναν δ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ περ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον. Comparison of these expressions with *Iliad* 18.4 reveals the reason for the metrical fault in the latter: since expressions of the type τὰ φρονέων ἃ... demand that their object be in the plural, the combination of such expressions with the appropriate form of the formula τετελεσμένον ἔσται would inevitably involve hiatus. At *Iliad* 2.36 and *Odyssey* 2.156 the metrically equivalent formula τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον was introduced to avoid hiatus. If at *Iliad* 18.4 the poet had adopted the solution offered by this formula, he could have produced something like *τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἃ οἱ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλον.⁹ He would thus have avoided the metrical fault without being forced to abandon traditional diction.

⁵ MHV 207.

⁶ See *Il.* 2.607 καὶ Τεγέην εἶχον καὶ Μαντινέην ἐρατεινήν, 608 Στύμφηλόν τ' εἶχον καὶ Παρρασίην ἐνέμοντο; cf. 574 Πελλήνην τ' εἶχον ἥδ' Αἴγιον ἀμφενέμοντο.

⁷ MHV 201.

⁸ *Il.* 2.36, 10.491; *Od.* 2.116; cf. also ὄρμηγεν (or ὄρμηναν or ὀρμαίνοντ') ἀνὰ θυμὸν at *Il.* 2.137, 24.680, *Od.* 2.156.

⁹ Cf. *Od.* 2.116 τὰ φρονέουσ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν, ἃ οἱ περὶ δῶκεν Ἀθήνη.

(4) The expression ἄφθιτα αἰεῖ, which also involves hiatus, occurs in Homer's description of Poseidon's underwater palace at Aegae (*Il.* 13.21–22):

Αἰγὰς, ἔνθα δέ οἱ κλυτὰ δώματα βένθεσι λίμνης
 χρύσεα μαρμαίροντα τετεύχεται ἄφθιτα αἰεῖ.

The metrical irregularity results from a modification of the formula ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ, which is used three times in the *Iliad* to describe precious objects of divine origin.¹⁰ Plainly, such descriptions can be metrically flawless only when the object in question occurs in the singular: the plural will inevitably involve hiatus, as it does in *Iliad* 13.22. How, then, does Homer usually describe such objects when they occur in the plural? Examination shows that Homer can use the formula θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι as a kind of plural for ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ: whereas the scepter of Agamemnon (*Il.* 2.46, 186) and the throne promised by Hera to Hypnos (*Il.* 14.238), both in the singular, are each referred to as ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ, the tires of the wheels (ἐπίσσωτρα) of Hera's chariot (*Il.* 5.725), the armor (τεύχεα) of Rhesus (*Il.* 10.439) and Achilles (*Il.* 18.83), and the automated golden statues of Hephaestus (*Il.* 18.377), all of them in the plural, are described as θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.¹¹ If Homer had resorted to this formula in the case of Poseidon's δώματα, he could have produced a regular line, *χρύσεα μαρμαίροντα τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, that would at the same time have used perfectly traditional language.¹²

Unlike the metrically irregular expressions considered so far, those that I shall now discuss could not be avoided by the simple substitution of an established Homeric formula. We shall, however, see that even in these cases there are formulaic patterns that the poet could have adapted to the context in order to prevent the metrical fault.

(5) According to Parry, the hiatus at *Iliad* 4.91, λαῶν, οἳ οἱ ἔποντο ἅπ' Αἰσίοιο ῥόων (describing Pandarus' men), was caused by adaptation of the formula ἅπ' Ὀκεανοῖο ῥόων.¹³ But this formula also occurs in the form παρ'

¹⁰ *MHV* 198–99.

¹¹ The combination of both characteristics can be found at *Il.* 5.724–25, in the description of Hera's chariot: τῶν ἦτοι χρυσέη ἵτις ἄφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε / χάλκε' ἐπίσσωτρα προσαρρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

¹² One might object that it was important to Homer to say that the palace of Poseidon was 'imperishable'; in that case nothing prevented him from saying ἄφθιτα μαρμαίροντα τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι; cf. the phrase ἄφθιτον ἀστερόεντα applied to the palace of Hephaestus at *Il.* 18.370.

¹³ *MHV* 208.

Ἰκεανοῖο ῥοάων, which apparently was intended for being used in metrical environments like the one in question.¹⁴ If the poet had turned to this pattern, the line *λαῶν, οἳ οἱ ἔποντο παρ' Αἰσῆποιο ῥοάων would have been both traditional and metrically correct.

(6) The phrase ἔγχεα ὀξύνοντα at *Iliad* 5.568 is a similar case. As Parry pointed out, this irregular expression is derived from the formula ἔγχει ὀξύνοντι, which occurs eight times in the epics.¹⁵ Consider, however, the expression τεύχεα παμφανόνωντα, which is found in the same position in the line.¹⁶ That the formation of an analogous expression, ἔγχεα παμφανόνωντα, would not have been at variance with epic usage is shown by the fact that the epithet παμφανόνωντα elsewhere modifies another Homeric word for 'spears', δούρατα (*Il.* 5.618–19).

(7) As for the hiatus at *Iliad* 18.48 Μαῖρα καὶ Ὠρεῖθια ἐϋπλόκαμός τ' Ἀμάθεια, a line from the list of the Nereids,¹⁷ we can see one way it could have been avoided if we look at a line from Hesiod's list of the Nereids, *Theogony* 250 Δωρὶς καὶ Πανόπη καὶ εὐειδῆς Γαλάτεια, where the introduction of the epithet εὐειδῆς circumvents the same metrical problem. Since εὐειδῆς, as an epithet for a woman, is not alien to Homer,¹⁸ there seems to be no reason why he could not have avoided the metrical fault by producing something like *Μαῖρα καὶ Ὠρεῖθια καὶ εὐειδῆς Ἀμάθεια.

(8) Finally, there is the case of *brevis in longo* in the expression μέροπες ἄνθρωποι at *Iliad* 18.288. As Kurt Witte pointed out as early as 1913, the irregular μέροπες ἄνθρωποι was prompted by analogy with μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, which occurs nine times in Homer; and Parry later showed that the expression is a result of the juxtaposition of two Homeric formulae, πόλις (or πόλεις) μερόπων ἀνθρώπων and Πριάμοιο πόλις (or πόλιν).¹⁹ But let us consider the whole context:

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πριάμοιο πόλιν μέροπες ἄνθρωποι
πάντες μυθέσκοντο πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον.

'Before now all mortal men would speak of Priam's city as rich in gold and rich in bronze'.

¹⁴ Cf. *Il.* 19.1 Ἡὼς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἄπ' Ἰκεανοῖο ῥοάων with *Od.* 22.197 οὐδὲ σέ γ' ἡριγένεια παρ' Ἰκεανοῖο ῥοάων. Parry (*ibid.*) does mention this variant but makes nothing of it.

¹⁵ *MHV* 199.

¹⁶ See *Il.* 18.144, cf. 5.294–95. Note also ἔντεα ... παμφανόνωντα at *Il.* 9.596, 15.120.

¹⁷ *MHV* 208.

¹⁸ See *Il.* 3.48 γυναῖκ'εὐειδέ' (of Helen).

¹⁹ Witte 1913, 223; *MHV* 197–98.

We can see now that Homer used the expression μέροπες ἄνθρωποι to convey the idea that Troy once enjoyed worldwide fame for its wealth. But we can also see that to express such an idea Homer did not in fact need μέροπες ἄνθρωποι or any other phrase meaning ‘mortal men’. So, for example, if the poet had said *πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πριάμοιο πόλιν κατ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν / πάντες μυθέσκοντο κτλ., the lines would have expressed his idea just as well and would at the same time have been metrically sound. Though the phrase κατ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν occurs in Homer only once (*Od.* 17.418), the equivalent expression ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν is attested seven times.²⁰ Of the eight occurrences of these phrases, five fall at the end of the verse; and in two cases, including the occurrence of κατ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν, the expressions are used to convey the idea of worldwide fame, the same idea that is at issue in the passage under discussion. Had he employed κατ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν at *Iliad* 18.288, the poet would have departed not at all from traditional usage.

We can see, therefore, that at least in some cases the poet’s real choice lay not, as Parry believed, between violating a metrical custom and abandoning a formula but, paradoxically, between violating a metrical custom and using or adapting an established formula. Accordingly, Parry’s assumption that the traditional poet would always choose the only expression the tradition could provide seems to need qualification.

2

When formulating his ideas, Parry proceeded from the assumption that the same rules applied both to the impersonal epic tradition and to its personal medium, the individual poet. Not infrequently, however, his conclusions seem to leave the latter out of the account. To take only one example: according to Parry, metrically irregular expressions like those discussed in this paper must have belonged to the traditional stock.²¹ This claim relates directly to the principle of economy he formulated: if the poet uses a metrically irregular expression, he does so because that is the only means the tradition can provide for conveying a given idea under given metrical conditions. If, however, the metrically irregular Homeric expressions which can be replaced by regular traditional equivalents, such as τετελεσμένα ἦεν, ἄφθιτα αἰεί, or ἔγχεα ὀξύεντα, belonged to the traditional stock, this would mean not only that the traditional diction preserved two expressions for one and the same idea (as it sometimes does), but also that one of them

²⁰ *Il.* 7.446, 24.342; *Od.* 1.98, 5.46, 15.79, 17.386, 19.107.

²¹ *MHV* 237.

was metrically faulty.²² Now there may be a reason to preserve a metrically faulty expression if it alone can convey a given idea;²³ but there would seem to be no such reason in cases where a metrically sound rendering of the same idea exists. In other words, when they are considered only from the perspective of the tradition, the expressions τετελεσμένα ἦεν, ἄφθιτα αἰεὶ, and ἔγχεα ὀξυόεντα appear to have *no raison d'être*. That expressions of this kind nonetheless emerge shows that the tradition was not the only factor involved.

As for the question why the poet did not choose the metrically regular alternatives in the cases discussed, one answer most naturally suggests itself in the majority of cases: he simply did not think of the appropriate expression while assembling his verses under the pressure of extempore composition.²⁴ At the same time, there are also cases in which a more specific interpretation seems to be more suitable. Thus, we can see that the metrically irregular τετελεσμένα ἦεν, implying as it does that Achilles' premonition has already come true,²⁵ is a more powerful expression than the regular τελέεσθαι ἔμμελλον: perhaps this consideration determined the poet's choice at *Iliad* 18.4. One can take a similar approach to the description of Poseidon's palace at *Iliad* 13.22: a palace made of gold is an obvious deviation from the traditional idiom;²⁶ perhaps the metrical flaw in this verse occurred because the poet wished to introduce just such a palace.

It is quite possible, therefore, that some metrical flaws were due not so much to the poet's failure to use his stock in a perfect—let me say, a computer-like—way,

²² This argument does not apply to expressions that, though metrically regular in themselves, produce a metrical irregularity when used in a certain context (e.g., the case of Ὀδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός or ἄπ' Αἰσίοιοιο ῥόων discussed above).

²³ This is obviously the case with πῶεα οἰῶν, which occurs at *Il.* 11.678 and *Od.* 14.100 (cf. *MHV* 212–13): the hiatus could be avoided if πῶεα οἰῶν were replaced by πῶεα μῆλων (see *Od.* 4.413 πῶεσι μῆλων, cf. *Hes. Op.* 786), but since in *Il.* 11.678 and *Od.* 14.100 the flock is divided into sheep and goats, the use of the collective term μῆλα is precluded.

²⁴ As Hoekstra 1965, 10–11 observed, Parry stated his view that the Homeric poems were orally composed only in his Harvard publications of the early 1930s (*MHV* 266–364), whereas in his earlier works, including *Les formules et la métrique* (1928), he spoke of the traditional (not the oral) character of Homer's poetry; see also ch. 6, 53. If Parry had arrived at the idea of oral-formulaic composition as early as *Les formules et la métrique*, his formulation of the alternatives open to the poet might have been less rigid.

²⁵ The idea itself is unique in the epics; on the theme of Thetis' warning as an innovation, see Willcock 1977, 52.

²⁶ Nowhere else in the epics do we encounter a golden palace: even the palace of Zeus is regularly referred to only as 'having a brazen base', χαλκοβατὲς δῶ (*Il.* 1.426, 14.173, 21.438, 505): the phrase is also applied to the palaces of Hephaestus (*Od.* 8.321) and Alcinous (*Od.* 13.4). Cf. also *Il.* 18.371, where the palace of Hephaestus is referred to as 'made of bronze' (δόμον ... χάλκεον).

but to his wish to express something for which his tradition provides no ready-made diction.²⁷ In either case we must admit a sort of tension between the epic tradition and the individual poet. To be sure, this tension can be recognized not only in the expressions discussed in this paper (compare, for instance, non-traditional Homeric usages that contain no metrical faults). But metrically irregular expressions which can be replaced by regular traditional equivalents allow us to identify not only a deviation from the norm but also the very norm from which the deviation has been made. It is with their aid, therefore, that the existence of such a tension can most clearly be shown.

²⁷ Parry saw such a motive as characteristic of 'a poet of an individual style'; he regarded the use of the latter in traditional poetry as a sign of decline, see especially *MHV* 237–38, his discussion of the expression Ὀδυσσεύς ἱερὴ ἴς occurring in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* ([Hes]. fr. 198.2 M–W). See also below, chs. 5 and 9.

4 Formulaic and Nonformulaic Elements in Homer

According to the hypothesis originally put forward by Milman Parry, all Homeric expressions were assumed to be formulae or modifications of formulaic patterns, organized in so-called 'formulaic systems'; these systems, of which the Homeric epics presumably represented only a part, were thought to provide for the expression of a given idea in any grammatical form and under any metrical conditions.¹ As the study of Homer's formulaic composition proceeded from the proper to the common nouns, however, it became clear that the gaps in the formulaic systems were too numerous to be ascribed simply to the chances of representation,² and that there was in fact insufficient evidence for asserting the thoroughly formulaic character of Homeric diction. Thus, according to the figures adduced by J.B. Hainsworth, the proportion of unique expressions among noun-epithet combinations that do not contain proper names ranges from one-third to one-half—a proportion that, as Hainsworth says, is 'disturbingly high in a diction commonly supposed to be entirely formulaic'.³ If one further considers that a single word occupying a fixed position in the hexameter cannot be counted as a formula,⁴ one must agree with Arie Hoekstra that 'it is practically out of the question that Homer's diction is wholly formulaic and traditional'.⁵

The problem, however, is that neither this statement nor Parry's original thesis can be verified, for the simple reason that we have no means of identifying a nonformulaic expression. As distinct from the formulae, which are easily recognized because of their repetition, a unique expression, taken as it stands, does not reveal whether it is an underrepresented formula or a nonformulaic expression. As a result, scholars more often than not find that 'it is impossible even to guess whether [a given expression] ... is the sole survival of a traditional

¹ As Hainsworth 1968, 8, pointed out, the term 'formulaic system' (or 'formula-system' or 'the system of formulae', Parry's 'système de formules'), though ubiquitous in Homeric scholarship, is often used loosely and variably. For an adequate account of Parry's intended meaning, see Schein 1984, 6–7.

² See esp. Pope 1963, 12–13; Hainsworth 1968, 72–73; Hoekstra 1965, 15–16.

³ Hainsworth 1962, 66; for the figures, see Hainsworth 1964.

⁴ See O'Neill 1942; as O'Neill has shown, words of the same metrical shape tend to occupy fixed metrical positions in any hexametric poetry: hence, treating any such single word as a formula would make the distinction between formulaic and nonformulaic poetry obsolete. Cf. also the excellent discussion by Hoekstra 1965, 14, 20–25.

⁵ Hoekstra 1965, 24; cf. Hainsworth 1968, 13.

phrase or a new creation'.⁶ I believe that this uncertainty is mainly attributable to our practice of limiting our investigations to the noun-epithet combinations, and that it can be overcome if we subject a verbal rather than a nominal idea to formulaic analysis.

It need hardly be said that verbal expressions are far from being just another part of Homeric diction. For all the importance of the noun-epithet combinations, we must remember that Homer's main task was not merely to name Agamemnon or the tower-like body-shield but to recount a story, and that verbs are the essential means by which stories are recounted. The verbs provide the contexts that determine how a given name is used, whereas nominal expressions, including noun-epithet combinations, by their very nature cannot stand by themselves: a noun-epithet combination for 'sea' can participate in conveying such different ideas as 'to sail across the sea' and 'to come to the seashore', but this does not affect the corresponding formulaic system. Hence, whereas the study of noun-epithet combinations can only establish formulaic systems on purely morphological grounds, tracing a given verbal idea would allow us to isolate a unit of content that reflects Homer's real needs in treating a given subject. By analyzing such a unit we should be able to approach the issue of underrepresentation more concretely than in the case of the noun-epithet combinations. If a given unique expression conveys an idea different from those usually expressed by the traditional formulae, or if it differs from these formulae in other respects, there would be reason to regard the expression as nonformulaic rather than as an underrepresented formula. Noun-epithet combinations do not lend themselves to this sort of analysis: since these expressions are detached from their original contexts, we cannot say whether they participate in the expression of unusual or singular ideas. Only by analyzing a verbal idea can we isolate a group of expressions that exhausts everything Homer said on a given subject, and at the same time keep before our eyes the contexts in which these expressions occur.

There is, however, an additional problem. In the study of Homer's formulaic composition, the verbal formulae still constitute a virtually unexplored field. In spite of the obvious morphological differences between the noun and the verb,⁷ it is usually taken for granted that conclusions reached on the basis of the noun-epithet combinations are universally applicable to other parts of Homeric diction, including the verb. This can hardly be called a correct procedure, especially as the applicability of Parry's method to Homer's verbal expressions was contested

⁶ Gray 1947, 57, commenting on *Il.* 1.157 θάλασσά τε ἡχίεσσα; see also Hainsworth 1964, 164; Alexanderson 1970, 39.

⁷ See esp. Hoekstra 1965, 50–51.

as early as 1929, in Pierre Chantraine's review of *L'épithète traditionnelle*.⁸ Chantraine's legitimate doubts have not been answered by the Parryists, so that the question still remains open. Accordingly, the main question of this paper—whether by examining a large unit of content defined by a given verbal idea we can better understand the relations between the formulaic and the nonformulaic in Homer—cannot be answered until we have resolved another question: are the principles of Homer's formulaic composition as applicable to the verbal expressions as they are to the noun-epithet combinations.

Because they are evenly distributed in the Homeric poems, the expressions for emotions constitute a suitable test-group. Not being tied to any particular context, they can be found in both 'early' and 'late' parts of the epics, in both martial and domestic episodes, in the main narrative, the digressions, the speeches, and the similes. I have chosen to test the expressions for joy because they have proved to be the most clearly delimited group among the descriptions of emotions in Homer: the descriptions of joy rely on only three verbs—γηθέω, γάνυμαι, and χαίρω—and involve no substitute systems whose analysis would require that the scope of the investigation be enlarged.⁹ I have observed the following limitations: since participles are not conjugated and thus, for the purpose of formulaic analysis, resemble nouns more than they do verbs, I have not taken them into account (but see n. 24); since the verb χαίρω, when used in the context of greeting, does not function as an expression of joy, I have excluded such uses from the analysis. Within these limitations I have assembled a group of exactly one hundred expressions to serve as the subject of the forthcoming analysis; I will also adduce the relevant material from other epic poetry whenever it is available.

I have provisionally distributed the expressions into the categories 'formulaic' and 'isolated' according to the following criteria. I count as formulaic any expression which occurs at least twice in Homer or any unique expression which presents a modification of a recognizable formulaic pattern. Conversely, I count as isolated any unique expression which cannot be shown to follow an attested formulaic pattern; the fact that a single word in a given expression occupies a fixed position in the hexameter is not sufficient ground for regarding the expression as formulaic (see above, n. 4). There is, in addition, a third category, the so-

⁸ Chantraine 1929, 299; a similar doubt about formulae involving common nouns has been removed, mainly thanks to the studies of J.B. Hainsworth.

⁹ Thus, for example, the feeling of sorrow is regularly expressed by the combinations ἄχος εἶλε or ἄχος γένετο, so that an analysis of Homer's expressions for this emotion would have to consider all the formulaic systems in which the two forms, εἶλε and γένετο, occur, whether or not these systems involve an expression of sorrow as such.

called ‘unqualified’ expressions, that is, expressions that do not unequivocally belong to either of the other two categories. I realize that these three categories, while allowing one to avoid forced decisions for ambiguous phrases, result in a somewhat loose classification of the material, but this is not meant to be a rigorously statistical study: my main intention is to suggest the general proportions of the formulaic and the nonformulaic in the group of expressions under discussion and, if possible, to define the relations between these two categories.

For a convenient presentation of the material, I have divided the expressions into groups according to the main word-breaks in the hexameter and, whenever possible, according to the main ‘stems’ of related expressions. The general context of an expression is specified as follows: d.sp. = direct speech, sim. = simile, rem. = reminiscence;¹⁰ expressions not labelled in one of these ways belong to the main narrative. If an expression is characterized in G.P. Shipp’s *Studies in the Language of Homer* as late or abnormal, I simply note this fact without further commentary.¹¹

1 Formulaic Expressions

This group comprises all the expressions for joy that can be shown to have been produced by means of the formulaic technique—that is, both the formulae proper and their modifications—as well as the unique expressions that can be shown to be related to an attested formulaic pattern.

1.1 Expressions introduced in the first half of the verse

1.1.1 Formulaic patterns

(1) <i>Il.</i> 6.212	ὥς φάτο, γήθησεν δὲ βοῆν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης
(2) <i>Il.</i> 17.567	" " " " θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
(3) <i>Od.</i> 7.329	" " " " πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς
(4) <i>Od.</i> 8.199	" " " " " " "
(5) <i>Od.</i> 13.250	" " " " " " "

¹⁰ Though formally part of direct speech, the reminiscences are distinguished both by the higher density of their formulaic elements and by their common use of the imperfect tense, not the present that is usually employed in direct speech. These two features seem to justify treating the reminiscences as a separate part of the epic narrative, not identical with direct speech.

¹¹ All the references are to Shipp 1972, the second edition of Shipp’s *Studies*. It is worth mentioning that Shipp left *Iliad* 10, 23, and 24 without commentary.

- (6) *Od.* 18.281 " " " " " " "
 (7) *Od.* 8.385 " " " δ' ἱερὸν μένος Ἀλκινόοιο

Modifications:

- (8) *Od.* 2.35 ὦς φάτο, χαῖρε δὲ φήμη Ὀδυσσεύος φίλος υἱός¹²
 (9) *Il.* 1.255 ἦ κεν γηθήσαι Πρίαμος Πριάμοιο τε παῖδες (d.sp; Shipp 118).¹³

This pattern, the most widespread Homeric formula for the expression of joy, is itself a variant of a very prolific stem of the type ὦς φάτο, μείδισεν δέ... ὦς φάτο, ῥίγησεν δέ....¹⁴ It is always introduced after the first-foot caesura, following the expression ὦς φάτο; the pattern is also attested in other epic poetry (see *H.Cer.* 370 and *Hes. Th.* 173). The modifications include replacement of the usual γηθέω by χαίρω (no. 8) and adaptation of the formula to a modal proposition (no. 9).

- (10) *Il.* 24.424 ὦς φάτο, γήθησεν δ' ὃ γέρων, καὶ ἀμείβετο μύθῳ

Modification:

- (11) *Il.* 14.270 ὦς φάτο, χήρατο δ' ὕπνος, ἀμειβόμενος δὲ προσηύδα (Shipp 110, 285).

This is an abridged variant of the preceding pattern, allowing the poet to express the sequence hearing-rejoicing-reacting within a single verse. As in number 8, the modification consists in the replacement of γηθέω with χαίρω, entailing the abnormal form χήρατο.

- (12) *Il.* 3.111 ὦς ἔφαθ', οἳ δ' ἐχάρησαν Ἀχαιοί τε Τρῳῆς τε
 (13) *Il.* 19.74 " " " " ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί.

¹² A metrical equivalent of the usual γήθησεν δέ, the expression χαῖρε δὲ φήμη deviates from the sequence imperfect-aorist (φάτο ... γήθησεν) regularly used in expressions of this type; see Chantraine 1953, 193. The expression is probably a hybrid of the pattern γήθησεν δέ and the pattern found in nos. 27 and 28, where the imperfect χαῖρε(v) and a dative (κλεηδόνι, synonymous with φήμη) also occur.

¹³ As Shipp suggested, the shorter form γηθήσαι was preferred to the more usual γηθήσειε(v) in order to combine the verb with the formula Πρίαμος Πριάμοιο τε παῖδες; note also that this form allows the optative to be used in place of γήθησεν (nos. 1–7), thus preserving the structure of this most common Homeric expression for joy.

¹⁴ This pattern was discussed by Parry in *L'épithète traditionnelle*; see *MHV* 11–12.

Modification:

- (14) *Od.* 23.32 ὥς ἔφαθ', ἡ δ' ἐχάρη καὶ ἀπὸ λέκτροιο θοροῦσα.

This is a fairly uncommon postconsonantal variant of the preceding stem, employing the verb χαίρω after the second-foot caesura; it is not attested in other epic poetry. As in numbers 10 and 11, the modification presents an abridgement of an originally hexameter-long pattern.

- (15) *Il.* 4.255 τοὺς δὲ ἰδὼν γήθησεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
 (16) *Il.* 8.278 τὸν δὲ " " " " "
 (17) *Od.* 5.486 τὴν μὲν ἰδὼν γήθησε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς
 (18) *Od.* 24.504 " " " " " " " "

Modification:

- (19) *Il.* 1.330 – ~ ~ οὐδ' ἄρα τῷ γε ἰδὼν γήθησεν Ἀχιλλεύς.

This is another ramified stem, the original form of which is certainly represented by the variant τοὺς δέ (or τὸν δέ etc.) rather than by the variant τὴν μὲν etc.;¹⁵ the pattern is also attested with the verb ῥιγέω (*Il.* 5.596, 11.345, 12.331). The modification adapts the original formula to a negative proposition, introducing it after the first foot; this leads to the displacement of the combination ἰδὼν γήθησε(v) two feet forward.

- (20) *Od.* 22.207 τὴν δ' Ὀδυσσεύς γήθησεν ἰδὼν καὶ μῦθον ἔειπε

Modifications:

- (21) *Od.* 13.226 τὴν δ' Ὀδυσσεύς γήθησεν ἰδὼν καὶ ἐναντίος ἦλθε
 (22) *Il.* 10.190 τοὺς δ' ὁ γέρων " " θάρσυνέ τε μύθῳ
 (23) *Il.* 4.283 καὶ τοὺς μὲν γήθησεν ἰδὼν κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
 (24) *Il.* 4.311 καὶ τὸν μὲν " " " " " "

This is an abridged variant of the preceding pattern, accompanied by a change in the original order (γήθησεν ἰδὼν instead of ἰδὼν γήθησε(v) as in nos. 15–19) without a simultaneous change in the position of γήθησε(v). I suggest that like number 10 this abridgement was originally intended to make the formula fit the sequence seeing-rejoicing-reacting within a single verse; only number 20 expresses

¹⁵ The μὲν-variant became available only after the disappearance of the digamma; see Hoekstra 1965, 35.

this general sense, and this is why I regard both number 22, which is a particular application of the same idea, and number 21, which adapts the pattern to another context, as modifications. As for numbers 23 and 24, both expressions adapt the formula to the same specific context (Agamemnon inspects his army, rejoicing anew on seeing a contingent that is prepared for battle; cf. no. 15, where his first reaction is registered) and cannot be taken to represent a generally applicable formulaic pattern.

(25) *Od.* 13.353 γήθησέν τ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς

(26) *Od.* 21.414 " " " " " " " " .

The phrase ῥίγησεν δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων at *Iliad* 4.148 shows that numbers 25 and 26, which at first sight look like a fixed expression, in fact represent a more general formulaic pattern. It differs from the preceding patterns in that it does not introduce the feeling of joy as one's response to hearing or seeing something. It is not attested in other epic poetry.

1.1.2 Fixed expressions

(27) *Od.* 18.117 ὥς ἄρ' ἔφην, χαῖρεν δὲ κληδόνι δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς

(28) *Od.* 20.120 " ἔφη, " " " " " " .

Note the employment of the imperfect, which is rather unusual in this context (cf. n. 12 above).

1.1.3 Modifications of other patterns

(29) *Il.* 13.494 ὥς Αἰνεία θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι γεγῆθαι.

The related pattern is obviously ὄφρ' εἴπω τά με θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι κελεύει (4x *Il.*, 5x *Od.*), or something to this effect.

(30) *Il.* 16.530 Γλαῦκος δ' ἔγνω ἦσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ γήθησέν τε.

This is an obvious modification of the pattern αὐτὰρ ὁ (or: Ἔκτωρ) δ' ἔγνω ἦσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ φώνησέν τε (3x *Il.*).¹⁶

¹⁶ Actually, in this context one would rather expect the formula χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ (nos. 46–51 below). Note that γήθησέν τε violates the usual sequence aorist-imperfect (the closest parallel is *Il.*

(31) *Od.* 23.266 οὐ μὲν τοι θυμὸς κεχαρήσεται οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸς (d.sp.; Shipp 116, 358)

(32) *Il.* 15.98 πᾶσιν ὁμῶς θυμὸν κεχαρησέμεν, οὔτε βροτοῖσιν... (d.sp.; Shipp 116, 287).

No clear prototype can be identified for the combination θυμὸς (-ὸν) κεχαρήσεται (-μεν); however, the expression's presence in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* strongly suggests that such a prototype did exist. At the same time, if we take the expression to be an original formula, it would be not only our sole example of a verbal formula in the future tense but also a rare case of a linguistically late formula (see Shipp 1972, 116). Because of this, I suggest that the original expression was θυμῷ κεχαρισμένε, formed by analogy with the formula κεχαρισμένε θυμῷ (5x *Il.*, 1x *Od.*), which gave rise to a similar modification in another part of the verse as well (see no. 54 below).

1.2 Expressions introduced in the middle of the verse

1.2.1 Formulaic patterns

(33) *Il.* 11.683 γεγήθει δὲ φρένα Νηλεὺς (rem.)

Modifications:

(34) *Il.* 8.559 γέγηθε δὲ τε φρένα ποιμήν (sim.)

(35) *Od.* 6.106 γέγηθε δὲ τε φρένα Λητώ (sim.)

(36) *Il.* 6.481 χαρείη δὲ φρένα μήτηρ (d.sp.)

(37) *Il.* 13.493 γάννυται δ' ἄρα τε φρένα ποιμήν (sim.)

(38) *Il.* 20.405 γάννυται δὲ τε τοῖς ἐνοσίχθων (sim.).

That number 33, though it occurs only once, should be taken as the prototype of the entire stem follows not only from its greater syntactic simplicity (with δέ, as distinct from the nonfunctional δέ τε in nos. 34 and 35), but also from the fact that this is exactly the form that is found in other epic poetry (see *H. Cer.* 232 γεγήθει δὲ φρένα μήτηρ and *H. Ven.* 216 γεγήθει δὲ φρένας ἔνδον). Though all the modifications are similar in adapting the prototype to a different tense or mood

14.154–56 ἔγνω ... χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ: see no. 46; on the sequence aorist-imperfect, see Chantraine 1953, 193).

(nos. 34, 35, 37, 38 to the present, and no. 36 to the optative),¹⁷ the two last examples are peculiar in starting the expression at the penthemimeral ('masculine') caesura.¹⁸

(39) *Od.* 24.513 ἐχάρη καὶ μῦθον ἔειπε

Modification:

(40) *Il.* 3.76 ἐχάρη μέγα μῦθον ἀκούσας.

I suggest that this pattern was originally intended to express the sequence hearing-rejoicing-reacting within a single verse;¹⁹ in this regard it resembles the patterns dealt with above in numbers 10 and 20. But the fixed position of (ἐ)χάρη after one of the central caesurae (not paralleled in the γήθησεν of the two former patterns; see also nos. 88 and 89 below) suggests an independent variant specially tailored to the middle of the verse.

(41) *Od.* 4.344 κεχάροντο δὲ πάντες Ἀχαιοί (rem.)

(42) *Od.* 17.135 " " " " (rem.).

That the expression presents a formulaic pattern rather than a fixed phrase is demonstrated by κεχάρητο δὲ Κύκνος ἀμύμων at *Scutum* 65.

1.2.2 Modifications of other patterns

(43) *Od.* 7.269 γήθησε δέ μοι φίλον ἦτορ (rem.).

Though unique, this expression is obviously related to Homeric phrases such as *Iliad* 5.670 μαίμησε δέ οἱ φίλον ἦτορ, *Iliad* 21.389 ἐγέλασσε δέ οἱ φίλον ἦτορ, and the like.

¹⁷ Cf. also *Od.* 6.147 χολώσαιτο φρένα κούρη. I take γέγηθα to have the force of a present ('I am glad'; cf. LSJ, s.v. γηθέω); consequently, the pluperfect γεγήθειν must have the force of an imperfect.

¹⁸ It is not out of the question that nos. 37 and 38 present an independent, postpenthemimeral variant of the pattern discussed; however, since they (like the modifications) are in the present tense rather than the imperfect, I find it preferable to group them with the modifications.

¹⁹ The full contexts of nos. 39 and 40 are ὥς φάτο, Λαέρτης δ' ἐχάρη κτλ., and ὥς ἔφαθ', Ἐκτωρ δ' αὖτ' ἐχάρη κτλ., respectively.

1.3 Expressions introduced in the second half of the verse

1.3.1 Formulaic patterns

- (44) *Od.* 14.51 χαῖρε δ' Ὀδυσσεύς
 (45) *Od.* 14.526 " " "

The phrase χαῖρε δὲ Λητώ in *Hymn to Apollo* 125 suggests that this is a formulaic pattern (viz., *χαῖρε δ' Ἀχιλλεύς, and the like) rather than a fixed expression.

1.3.2 Fixed expressions

- (46) *Il.* 14.156 χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ
 (47) *Il.* 21.423 " " "
 (48) *Il.* 22.224 " " "
 (49) *Od.* 8.483 " " "
 (50) *Od.* 14.113 " " "
 (51) *Od.* 24.545 " " "
 (52) *Il.* 5.514 τοὶ δὲ χάρησαν
 (53) *Il.* 7.307 " " "

1.3.3 Modifications of other patterns

- (54) *Il.* 1.256 ἄλλοι τε Τρῶες μέγα κεν κεχαροῖατο θυμῷ (d.sp.; Shipp 226).

Number 54 is an obvious modification of the formula ἐμῷ κεχαρισμένε θυμῷ (5x *Il.*, 1x *Od.*; cf. also *Od.* 6.32 κεχάριστο δὲ θυμῷ). Another similar modification is *Hymn to Demeter* 458 κεχάρηντο δὲ θυμῷ.

1.4 Expressions in enjambment

1.4.1 Formulaic patterns

- (55) *Od.* 4.259–60 αὐτὰρ ἐμὸν κῆρ / χαῖρ' (rem.)
 (56) *Od.* 20.89–90 " " " / " (rem.)

Modification:

- (57) *Il.* 14.139–40 ὁλοὸν κῆρ / γηθεῖ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι (d.sp.; Shipp 285).

There are plenty of associated expressions (e.g., *Od.* 12.192–93 αὐτὰρ ἐμὸν κῆρ / ἤθελ', *Od.* 7.82–83 = 23.85–86 πολλὰ δέ οἱ κῆρ / ὤρμαιν'. For number 57, see especially *Odyssey* 16.274–75 σὸν δὲ φίλον κῆρ / τετλάτω ἐν στήθεσσι; for a similar scanning, see *Iliad* 6.523–24 τὸ δ' ἐμὸν κῆρ / ἄχνηται ἐν θυμῷ.

1.4.2 Fixed expressions

- (58) *Il.* 24.321–22 οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες / γήθησαν, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θυμὸς ἰάνθη
 (59) *Od.* 15.164–65 " " / " " " " " " " " .

The formula οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες / γήθησαν is also attested in the *Hymns* (33.16–17).

1.4.3 Modifications of other patterns

- (60) *Il.* 13.414–16 ἔ φημι / ... / γηθήσειν κατὰ θυμόν (d.sp.).

The phrase of which our expression is a part, extending as it does over three lines and involving two 'necessary' enjambments, can hardly be counted as formulaic; but the expression itself is obviously connected with the formulaic pattern represented in phrases such as *Odyssey* 1.323 θάμβησεν κατὰ θυμόν and the like.

Of the sixty expressions in this group, thirty-seven (62%) are formulae proper, and twenty-three (38%) are modifications of attested formulaic patterns. They are distributed among different contexts as follows: the majority (42) are found in the main narrative, while the rest are distributed more or less evenly among reminiscences (6), direct speech (7), and similes (5); all the occurrences in direct speech and the similes are modifications of formulaic patterns (see Table 1). The temporal and modal distribution is as follows: the majority are in the aorist indicative (33) and the imperfect (15), while the rest are in the present indicative (5), the optative (3), and the future (3); the present, the optative, and the future occur only in the modifications of formulaic patterns (see Table 2). All the personal forms are in the third person singular or plural (see Table 3).²⁰ The six expressions marked by Shipp as late or abnormal constitute ten percent of the total; all are modifications of formulaic patterns (see Table 3). Clearly, then, most of the formulaic expressions—the formulae proper (excluding the modifications)—form a coherent group: they occur only in the main narrative or the reminiscences,

²⁰ This covers all the expressions except the future infinitives in nos. 32 and 60.

they are formulated in the third person singular or plural of the aorist or imperfect, and they are free from late or abnormal linguistic features.

2 Isolated Expressions

This group comprises the expressions for joy that are not only unique but also isolated, in that they are not related to an attested formulaic pattern.

2.1 Expressions introduced in the first half of the verse

- (61) *Od.* 14.377 ἡδ' οἱ χαίρουσιν (d.sp.)
- (62) *Il.* 3.23 ὥς τε λέων ἐχάρη (sim.)
- (63) *Od.* 3.52 χαῖρε δ' Ἀθηναίη
- (64) *Od.* 24.313 χαῖρε δὲ κείνος ἰών (rem.)
- (65) *Il.* 3.27 ὥς ἐχάρη Μενέλαος (sim.; Shipp 237)
- (66) *Il.* 10.277 χαῖρε δὲ τῷ ὄρνιθ' Ὀδυσσεύς
- (67) *Il.* 18.259 χαίρεσκον γὰρ ἔγωγε (rem.)
- (68) *Od.* 22.411 ἐν θυμῷ, γρη῏, χαῖρε (d.sp.)
- (69) *Il.* 11.73 – ~ Ἔρις δ' ἄρα χαῖρε²¹
- (70) *Od.* 2.249 οὐ κέν οἱ κεχάροίτο γυνή (d.sp.)
- (71) *Il.* 19.185 χαίρω σεῦ Λαερτιάδη τὸν μῦθον ἀκούσας (d.sp.).

As distinct from the formulaic expressions, the isolated expressions that start at the beginning of the verse only rarely reach its end, usually stopping at the penthemimeral, the trochaic, or the hephthemimeral caesura. Note that numbers 62 and 65 are two 'horns' of the same simile.

2.2 Expressions introduced in the middle of the verse

- (72) *Il.* 9.77 τίς ἄν τάδε γηθήσειε; (d.sp.)
- (73) *Il.* 21.347 χαίρει δέ μιν ὅς τις ἐθείρη (sim.)
- (74) *Od.* 22.306 χαίρουσι δέ τ' ἀνέρες ἄγρη (sim.).

Note that number 72 begins after the trochaic caesura, numbers 73 and 74 after the penthemimeral caesura.

²¹ Though linguistically normal in itself, the expression is part of a highly problematic passage: see Shipp 1972, 274. Note that the position of χαῖρε is unique in Homer, being paralleled only in *H. Ap.* 90 Δῆλος μὲν μάλα χαῖρε. Cf. also the imperative χαῖρε in no. 68 above.

2.3 Expressions introduced in the second half of the verse

- (75) *Od.* 10.419 ὦς ἐχάρημεν (d.sp.)
 (76) *Od.* 24.514 ἦ μάλα χαίρω (d.sp.; Shipp 363)
 (77) *Il.* 7.191 χαίρω δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς (d.sp.)²²
 (78) *Il.* 23.647 χαίρει δέ μοι ἥτορ (d.sp.).

Number 75 begins after the bucolic diaeresis, numbers 76–78 after the hephthemimeral caesura.

2.4 Expressions in enjambment

- (79) *Od.* 23.266–67 οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸς / χαίρω (d.sp.; Shipp 116, 358)
 (80) *Il.* 20.362–63 οὐδέ τιν' οἶω / Τρώων χαίρήσιν (d.sp.; Shipp 116)
 (81) *Od.* 12.379–80 ἦσιν ἐγὼ γε / χαίρεσκον (d.sp.)
 (82) *Il.* 13.343–33 μάλα κεν θρασυκάρδιος εἴη / ὅς τότε γηθήσειεν
 (83) *Il.* 8.377–78 ἦ νῶϊ Πριάμοιο πᾶϊς κορυθαίολος Ἴκτωρ / γηθήσει (d.sp.; Shipp 262)
 (84) *Il.* 24.490–91 ἀλλ' ἦτοι κείνός γε ... / χαίρει τ' ἐν θυμῷ (d.sp.)
 (85) *Il.* 24.705–6 εἴ ποτε καὶ ζῶοντι ... / χαίρετ' (d.sp.)
 (86) *Il.* 14.503–4 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦ Προμάχοιο δάμαρ ... / ἀνδρὶ φίλῳ ἐλθόντι γανύσσεται (d.sp.)
 (87) *Od.* 8.77–78 ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων / χαίρε νόῳ (rem.).

As distinct from the formulaic expressions in enjambment, which invariably begin after the bucolic diaeresis, the isolated expressions can begin after the bucolic diaeresis, after one of the central caesurae, or at the very beginning of the verse.

Of the twenty-seven expressions on the list, the majority (16) are found in direct speech, while the rest are evenly distributed among the main narrative (4), the similes (4), and the reminiscences (3) (see Table 1). The temporal and modal distribution is as follows: nine expressions are in the present indicative and eight in the imperfect; the rest are evenly distributed among the aorist and future indicative and the optative (3 each); one expression is in the imperative (see Table 2). Alongside the usual third person singular or plural, we find five examples of the first person, one of the second person, and one example of the imperative;²³ this means that twenty-two percent of the personal forms are not in the third person,

²² Note that the speech of Ajax, to which the expression belongs, abounds in Attic elements; see Shipp 1972, 259.

²³ All are personal forms except the future infinitive in no 80.

in which the formulaic expressions invariably occur (see Table 3). Four expressions (15%) contain late or abnormal forms (see Table 3).

3 Unqualified Expressions

In this group I include expressions which, though repeated twice or paralleled in other epic diction, cannot with sufficient reason be associated with an attested formulaic pattern, or which, though in themselves unique, cannot with sufficient reason be identified as isolated. I would suggest that the expressions in this group are underrepresented formulae, formulae in the stage of formation, isolated expressions whose repetition is due to chance, and the like.

3.1 Expressions introduced in the first half of the verse

None of the expressions belonging to this group is introduced in the first half of the verse.

3.2 Expressions introduced in the middle of the verse

(88) *Il.* 5.682 χάρη δ' ἄρα οἱ προσιόντι.

Though this phrase is unique I have not classified it as an isolated expression because of the possible parallel in *Hymn to Hermes* 506 χάρη δ' ἄρα μητιέτα Ζεύς.

(89) *Il.* 13.609 χάρη καὶ ἐέλετο νίκην.

We cannot exclude the possibility that this expression is an underrepresented formula which follows the pattern found in number 39 above.

(90) *Il.* 16.600 μέγα δὲ Τρῶες κεχάροντο.

This unique phrase is probably associated with the metrically equivalent formula represented in numbers 41 and 42 above.

(91) *Od.* 20.104 γήθησε δὲ δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς.

This expression should probably be referred to the same category as *Hymn to Apollo* 118 μείδησε δὲ γαῖ' ὑπένερθεν.

(92) *Il.* 7.127 μέγ' ἐγήθεεν ᾗ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ (rem.)

(93) *Il.* 7.214 μὲν ἐγήθεον εἰσορόωντες.

It is not certain that μέγ' (μὲν) ἐγήθεεν (-ον) can stand as an independent formulaic pattern, especially since the close proximity of the two expressions in *Iliad* 7 somewhat diminishes the possibility that this is a genuine formula.

3.3 Expressions introduced in the second half of the verse

(94) *Il.* 7.189 γήθησε δὲ θυμῷ.

This unique expression has a parallel in μείδησε δὲ θυμῷ at *Odyssey* 20.301.

(95) *Od.* 3.438 [ἴν'] ... κεχάρειτο ἰδοῦσα.

It is not certain whether number 95 is a modification of number 54 or an isolated expression.

(96) *Od.* 9.356 ᾗ κε σὺ χαίρης (d.sp.; Shipp 332)

(97) *Il.* 1.158 ὄφρα σὺ χαίρης (d.sp.).

Since this is an obvious case of repetition that could well be due to chance, I have not classified numbers 96 and 97 as either formulaic or isolated.

3.4 Expressions in enjambment

(98) *Od.* 19.462–63 – ~ ~ – τῷ μὲν ῥα πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ / χαῖρον νοστήσαντι (rem.)

(99) *Od.* 12. 42–43 – – – τῷ δ' οὗ τι γυνή καὶ νήπια τέκνα / οἴκαδε νοστήσαντι παρίσταται οὐδὲ γάνυνται (d.sp.).

The structure of number 98 is obviously similar to that of number 99: both begin after the second-foot caesura; the phrases πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ and γυνή καὶ νήπια τέκνα are metrically interchangeable and semantically associated; the participle νοστήσαντι occupies the same position in the verse. Yet the structure is still too loose to allow one unhesitatingly to place the expression among the formulae, and there are cases in which the same idea is expressed quite differently (see, e.g., nos. 70 and 86). Is this perhaps a formulaic pattern in the making?

(100) *Od.* 12.87–88 οὐδέ κέ τις μιν γηθήσειεν ἰδὼν (rem.).

I cannot classify this unique expression as isolated because of its possible association with formulaic patterns of the type γήθησεν ἰδών (see nos. 20–24) and because of the possible parallel in *Hymn to Aphrodite* 279 γηθήσεις ὁρόων.

Of these thirteen expressions, seven belong to the main narrative, three to direct speech, and three to reminiscences; the similes are not represented (see Table 1). The temporal and modal distribution is as follows: five expressions are in the aorist indicative, three in the imperfect; the subjunctive and the optative account for two expressions each; and the present indicative accounts for one expression (see Table 2). Two expressions in this group are in the second person, and one is identified by Shipp as late or abnormal (see Table 3).

4 Conclusions

In this paper, I undertook two tasks. The first was to examine whether the principles of formulaic composition are as applicable to Homer's verbal expressions as they are to the noun-epithet combinations. In the light of the material treated above, we can see that this question should be answered positively: of the one hundred expressions examined, sixty percent proved to be formulae or modifications of attested formulaic patterns, while the rest (40%) have been identified as isolated or have remained unqualified. This proportion is similar to Hainsworth's figures for unique expressions among noun-epithet combinations that do not contain proper names (from one-third to one-half).²⁴ To the extent, then, that these one hundred expressions are a representative sample, we can say that from the standpoint of formulaic composition Homer's verbal expressions behave in the same way as the rest of Homeric diction.²⁵ There is, then, no ground for questioning the applicability of Parry's theory to Homer's verbal expressions.

The main purpose of this study was to define the relations between the formulaic and the nonformulaic in Homeric diction. Here, instead of attempting to establish the so-called 'formulaic systems' on *a priori* morphological grounds, I

²⁴ See at n. 3 above. The nonsubstantivized participles expressing joy form a group of 21 expressions, of which 16 are formulaic, 2 are isolated, and 3 are unqualified. If these were also taken into account, the proportions of the formulaic, the isolated, and the unqualified expressions would be 63%, 24%, and 13%, respectively.

²⁵ To check my results, I also examined Homer's expressions for seafaring, including all the occurrences of πλέω (ἀποπλέω, περιπλέω, etc.), the relevant uses of ἐλαύνω and (δια)τρέχω and such rare verbs as ναυτίλλομαι and ποντοπορεύω. There were 55 expressions (including the participles), of which 28 (51%) were formulaic, 17 (31%) were isolated, and 10 (18%) were unqualified—proportions similar to those exhibited by the expressions for joy.

isolated a unit of content that exhausts everything Homer actually said on this specific subject. The results obtained from examining the structure of this unit and the behaviour of its components are as follows.

The distribution of Homer's expressions for joy among various epic contexts is represented in Table 1. Note that whereas a large majority of the formulaic expressions (70%) occur in the main narrative and only eleven-and-a-half percent in direct speech (in the case of the formulae proper the figures are 86.5% and zero, respectively), fifty-nine percent of the isolated expressions occur in direct speech and only fifteen percent in the main narrative.

The distribution of the expressions for joy among various tenses and moods is represented in Table 2. Note that whereas fifty-six-and-a-half percent of the formulaic expressions occur in the aorist and only eight-and-a-half percent in the present (the figures for the formulae proper are 65% and zero, respectively), thirty-three-and-a-half percent of the isolated expressions occur in the present and only eleven percent in the aorist.

We can see, then, that the formulaic and the isolated expressions behave as mirror-images of one another: whereas the formulaic expressions occur most frequently in the main narrative (as opposed to direct speech) and the aorist (as opposed to the present), the isolated expressions occur most frequently in direct speech and the present tense (note that both the reminiscences and the imperfect tense that frequently occurs in them are neutral in respect of this division). This functional specialization of the formulaic and the isolated expressions is further demonstrated by the distribution of the expressions for joy among the personal forms of the verb, as represented in Table 3: whereas the formulaic expressions—both the formulae proper and their modifications—occur only in the third person singular and plural, twenty-seven percent of the isolated expressions occur in the first or second person of the verb.

Of course, all this is not coincidental. The main group of formulaic expressions is clearly specialized so as to express the joy that springs from hearing or seeing something cheerful, which is of course the most common situation in the epic narrative: these are the expressions cast in the aorist. Note that the formulae in the aorist expressing joy as an immediate reaction occur in every portion of the verse: at the beginning of the line (nos. 25 and 26), after the first-foot caesura (nos. 1–7, 10, 12, 13), after the second-foot caesura (nos. 15–18, 20, 27, 28), after each of the central caesurae (nos. 39, 41, 42), and after the bucolic diaeresis (nos. 52, 53, 58, 59). All these formulae are in the third person singular or plural. Another, more restricted group of formulaic expressions is specialized to express joy as a feeling accompanying the main action; these expressions are cast in the imperfect and occur after the two main word-breaks in the second half of the verse, the

trochaic caesura (no. 33) and the bucolic diaeresis (nos. 44–51). Like the formulae in the aorist, all the formulae in the imperfect are in the third person. These exhaust Homer's formulaic system for the expression of joy.

One would reasonably expect that the task of expressing joy in senses other than those conveyed by the formulae proper would be performed by modifications of the formulaic patterns. And indeed, in the group of formulaic expressions only the modifications are encountered in the similes and direct speech (see Table 1), only the modifications occur in the present, the future, or the optative (see Table 2), and only the modifications contain forms characterized by Shipp as late or abnormal (see Table 3). If, however, we compare the modifications with the isolated expressions, we find that the modifications on the whole still behave in the same way as the formulae proper: forty-three-and-a-half percent of them occur in the main narrative (as opposed to fifteen percent of the isolated expressions) and are cast in the aorist (as opposed to eleven percent of the isolated expressions); they occur only in the third person; and they are found in direct speech and the present tense far less often than the isolated expressions. These findings are in line with Parry's view that the modifications were intended to adapt the traditional formulae 'to the expression of ideas more or less like those of the original formulae':²⁶ when the idea of joy must be expressed in senses differing from the formulae proper, the job is generally entrusted to the isolated expressions.

Thus, the so-called 'isolated' expressions differ from the formulaic expressions in several respects: they cannot be shown to have been modelled on formulaic patterns; and they tend to occur in direct speech (rather than the main narrative),²⁷ in the present tense (rather than the aorist), in forms of the verb other

26 MHV 196; Parry's system, however, did not provide the traditional poet with the ability to express ideas different from those expressed by the formulae proper. Note that both the isolated expressions and the modifications of formulaic patterns have high proportions of late and abnormal usages (see Table 3), probably because both types must have been formed to express joy in senses different from those conveyed by the formulae proper, with the isolated expressions used where the difference was greater, the modifications, where it was less.

27 Cf. Griffin 1986; Griffin concludes that Homeric speeches have 'important distinctions of vocabulary, and of style, from the rest' (p. 50). See also ch. 8 below.

than the third person,²⁸ and, above all, in unusual narrative situations.²⁹ All these differences justify the conclusion that the isolated expressions cannot be considered underrepresented formulae.³⁰

Let us return now to the so-called unqualified expressions. The way in which these expressions are distributed among epic contexts and among tenses and moods, sharply differing as it does from the clear functional specialization of the formulaic and the isolated expressions, confirms our earlier assumption that this is not a coherent group: it must embrace both formulae proper and nonformulaic expressions. We are now in a position to refer at least some of the unqualified expressions to one or the other of these clearly defined categories. Thus, not only do numbers 91 and 94 occur in the main narrative and in the aorist (the two principal indicators of a formulaic expression), but number 91 also supplies the missing third person singular expression for the penthemimeral caesura (the third person plural was represented in nos. 41 and 42), while number 94 supplies an aorist expression for the position after the hephthemimeral caesura, an expression that was missing in the formulaic system for joy. It is likely, then, that these two expressions are underrepresented formulae. The same seems to be true of numbers 92 and 93, which supply the missing imperfect expression for the position after the penthemimeral caesura. By contrast, numbers 96 and 97 should be identified as nonformulaic because they occur in the second person, a form that

28 According to Hoekstra 1965, 51, before the digamma was dropped ‘the share of the 3 p. sing. of imperf. and aor. is likely to have been proportionally even more prominent ... than it was in Homer’s time’. This likelihood, together with the relatively high proportion of late and abnormal usages in the isolated expressions, seems to indicate that these expressions belong to the ‘late’ layers of the Homeric epics. On the whole, however, I doubt that the evidence adduced in this study can be taken to suggest that the contexts in which these expressions occur (i.e., direct speech and similes) were much less prominent in epic poetry before Homer; see n. 35 below.

29 Since the formulae proper can express joy only as an immediate emotional response or as a feeling accompanying the main action, invariably in the 3rd person, every other expression of joy is necessarily ‘unusual’: note, for example, the complete lack of uniformity among Homer’s expressions for such a simple idea as ‘I am glad’ (nos. 71, 76, and 77; cf. no. 79).

30 Note that these differences are not universal characteristics found equally in every group of verbal expressions. Thus, most of the formulaic expressions for seafaring (64%) occur in reminiscences, a fact that explains the high frequency of both the imperfect tense (50% of the formulaic expressions; cf. n. 10) and the 1st-person forms of the verb (cf., e.g., such expressions as *πλέομεν νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμᾶρ* at *Od.* 10.28, 80 and 15.476, *πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ* at *Od.* 9.62, 105, 565; 10.77, 133, or *πλέομεν Τροίηθεν ἰόντες* at *Od.* 3.276). Such expressions mostly occur in Odysseus’ and others’ accounts of their travels, which must have been embedded in the epic tradition of *nostoi* (I wish to thank Robert Kaster for having drawn my attention to this point). Only by analyzing a given unit of content thoroughly and in context can we define the relation between its formulaic and nonformulaic elements.

is found neither in the formulae proper nor in their modifications. It is still unclear, however, whether numbers 89, 90, 95, and 100 should be treated as modifications or as nonformulaic expressions, and the status of numbers 88, 98, and 99 also remains uncertain. As a result, the formulaic and nonformulaic expressions account for sixty-four percent and twenty-nine percent of the total, respectively; the proportion of unqualified expressions amounts to only seven percent.

Thus, by comparing a given expression with the well-established formulaic patterns for a given idea, we can determine with a considerable degree of certainty whether the expression in question is formulaic or nonformulaic. Though this conclusion is based on only one specific group of expressions, it can reasonably be extended to any such group in Homer. To illustrate this, let us consider the case of *θάλασσά τε ἡχήμεσσα* (*Il.* 1.157).³¹ Though this unique expression does not by itself reveal whether it is nonformulaic or an underrepresented formula, we can decide the matter if we enlarge the context of our discussion. Dorothea Gray has shown that the group of formulaic expressions for sea lacks a formula in the nominative: all the nominative expressions for sea are unique.³² The reason for this becomes clear if we reflect that the idea ‘sea’ usually appears in contexts such as ‘to sail across the sea’, ‘to come to the seashore’, and the like, none of which requires the nominative case. Moreover, the idea ‘the sea divides’, which is the original context of *θάλασσά τε ἡχήμεσσα*,³³ is hardly an idea that the epic poets would need to express as frequently as, say, ‘to sail across the sea’. Hence, since the phrase is not related to an attested formulaic pattern, is found in the case that is not represented in the formulaic system for sea, and expresses an unusual idea, we can infer that *θάλασσά τε ἡχήμεσσα* is not a formula.

Now, if twenty-nine percent of Homer’s expressions for joy cannot be considered formulaic, we have a proportion that—to use Hainsworth’s words again—is ‘disturbingly high in a diction commonly supposed to be entirely formulaic’.³⁴ Given the regularity with which these nonformulaic expressions fall into the same morphological, semantic, and narrative categories, we must ask what function they perform in the epic diction as a whole. We saw that the distribution of the formulaic and the nonformulaic expressions is anything but fortuitous. Instead of evenly covering all possible situations requiring an expression of joy, the

³¹ Cf. above, with n. 6.

³² Gray 1947, 56.

³³ Achilles is explaining to Agamemnon that he has no feud with the Trojans: *Il.* 1.156–57 *ἐπεὶ ἦ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξύ / οὔρεά τε σκιόεντα θάλασσά τε ἡχήμεσσα*. As Griffin has shown, the expression is part of a highly individual passage: see his analysis of *Il.* 1.155–59 in Griffin 1986, 53–54.

³⁴ See above, n. 3.

formulaic system for this idea only provides expressions that occur in the third person of the aorist indicative or imperfect and express joy as an immediate emotional response or as a feeling accompanying the main action. All other situations in which joy might be expressed constitute one huge ‘gap’. As we saw, though this gap can occasionally be filled with modifications of formulaic patterns, it is most commonly filled with nonformulaic expressions: this is their primary function.³⁵

But if the nonformulaic expressions filled the gaps in the formulaic systems, this must mean that the nonformulaic elements in the traditional diction were complementary to the formulaic elements. This relationship, I believe, is to be explained by the same principle of economy on which Parry founded his theory of formulaic composition. Just as the traditional poet found it ‘thrifty’ to have formulae for all recurring ideas and standard narrative situations, so he found it equally thrifty not to overload his formulaic apparatus with expressions for just any idea and situation: as Maurice Pope aptly remarked, ‘it is easy to see how an equipment of formulae complete enough to meet the demands of every emergency might exceed the creative capacity of any individual singer’.³⁶ Moreover, there is reason to suggest that this thriftiness did not operate only at the level of the unique idea. Though each phrase in our list of nonformulaic expressions is unique, the same cannot be said of the ideas they express. For example, though the idea ‘no one would be glad on seeing this’ is repeated three times—in Nestor’s speech in *Iliad* 9 (no. 72), in the poet’s comment on the bloodshed in *Iliad* 13 (no. 82), and in Circe’s description of Scylla in *Odyssey* 12 (no. 100)—the optative γηθήσειε(v) is found in a different metrical position each time (after the hephthemimeral caesura, after the first-foot caesura, and at the beginning of the verse,

³⁵ Though it is reasonable to assume that the nonformulaic expressions belong to the ‘late’ layer of the Homeric diction, we cannot conclude that epic poetry before Homer consisted mostly of traditional formulae (see n. 28). If the nonformulaic expressions were indeed coined to fill the gaps left by the traditional formulae, this can only mean that, unlike the formulae, which were preserved in the stock of traditional expressions, the nonformulaic expressions were ephemeral creations that varied from one poet to another. Thus, even if epic poets before Homer also composed long speeches and extended similes abounding in nonformulaic expressions, the latter were not likely to survive, simply because they had not been fixed in writing. Cf. the observation of Hoekstra (in whose opinion the narrative element was more prominent in the pre-Homeric tradition than it is in Homer) that formulaic introductions to Homer’s speeches indicate that ‘even at very early stages dialogue existed alongside narrative’, see Hoekstra 1965, 52 n. 1. That this may also be true of similes is shown by the formulaic pattern represented in nos. 33–38, which seems cast specifically to fit the subject matter of similes. On speeches see also ch. 8, on nonformulaic expressions chs. 5 and 9.

³⁶ Pope 1963, 9; cf. also Hainsworth 1968, 114.

respectively): clearly, there was not even a tendency to make a formula out of this idea. The reason seems obvious: this idea was not common enough that it would be useful to coin a formula for it; where the poet wished to express something to this effect, he found it more convenient to create an appropriate expression *ad hoc*. To claim that the poet was not free to choose this alternative is to deny that he had the elementary skill required to compose a nonformulaic hexameter line.

Tab. 1: Contextual Distribution

	Narrative	Reminiscences	Similes	Direct Speech
Formulaic				
Total	70%	10%	8.5%	11.5%
Formulae	86.5%	13.5%	—	—
Modifications	43.5%	4.5%	21.5%	30.5%
Isolated	15%	11%	15%	59%
Unqualified	54%	23%	—	23%

Tab. 2: Temporal and modal distribution

	Aorist	Imperfect	Present	Future	OPTATIVE	Subjunctive	Imperative
Formulaic							
Total	56.5%	25%	8.5%	5%	5%	—	—
Formulae	65%	35%	—	—	—	—	—
Modifications	43.5%	8.5%	22%	13%	13%	—	—
Isolated	11%	30%	33.5%	11%	11%	—	3.5%
Unqualified	38.5%	23%	7.5%	—	15.5%	15.5%	—

Tab. 3: Presence of personal forms and late or abnormal features

	Personal Forms		
	3rd singular or plural	Other	Late or Abnormal Features
Formulaic			
Total	100%	—	10%
Formulae	100%	—	—
Modifications	100%	—	26%
Isolated	73%	27%	15%
Unqualified	85%	15%	7.5%

5 Homer, a Poet of an Individual Style

1

At *Odyssey* 8.73–78 we find:

Μοῦσ' ἄρ' αἰδὸν ἀνῆκεν ἀειδέμεναι κλέα ἀνδρῶν,
οἴμης, τῆς τότ' ἄρα κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἴκανε,
νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλεΐδew Ἀχιλλῆος,
ὥς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ θαλερῇ
ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν, ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
χαῖρε νόω, ὃ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο.

And the Muse stirred the bard to sing of the deeds of men, from the story whose fame then reached the wide heaven, the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles Peleus' son: how once they attacked each other with violent words at a sumptuous feast of gods, and Agamemnon, the lord of men, rejoiced in his mind that the best of the Achaeans were quarrelling. (my translation)

The two last verses of this passage have drawn much scholarly attention, mainly because of the puzzling χαῖρε νόω ('he rejoiced in his mind'), unparalleled elsewhere in Homer and disagreeing with the epic usage of the terms *noos*, which normally designates the seat of the intellect rather than of emotions.¹ Elsewhere, when Homer's expressions of joy involve mental organs, they employ such terms as *thumos*, *phrēn*, or *kēr*.²

But the passage also contains a mild metrical irregularity (-ω staying long in hiatus at v. 78),³ and necessary enjambment which splits the subject from the verb.⁴ Compare now the following:

¹ See Boehme 1929, 53; von Fritz 1943, 83–84; Snell 1953, 12; Harrison 1960, 73 n. 56; Chantraine 1968, s.v.; Jahn 1987, 102–10.

² See, e.g., such expressions as χαῖρε δὲ θυμῷ *Il.* 14.156, 21.423, 22.224; *Od.* 8.483, 14.113, 24.545; γεγῆθαι δὲ φρένα *Il.* 11.683, cf. 8.559, *Od.* 6.106; γηθόσυνος κῆρ *Il.* 4.272 and 326, 7.122, 13.82, 18.557. The only parallel to *Od.* 8.78 is *H.* 19.41 χαῖρεν δὲ νόω περιώσια δαίμων.

³ Although long vowels in hiatus emerge frequently enough in the epics (see below), this particular Homeric usage still cannot be qualified as normative. Cf. M. Parry's view that the same processes are responsible both for the severe irregularities, such as short syllables in hiatus or *breves in longo*, and for the milder cases, see *MHV* 192–94, 235–37.

⁴ This is the second of Parry's two kind of 'necessary' enjambment, the one in which 'the word group is divided between the two verses' (*MHV* 263); Kirk 1966, 107 suggests calling this type 'integral'. According to the classification proposed by M.W. Edwards 1966, 122–25, the present

νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλεΐδew Ἀχιλῆος,
 ὥς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ θαλείῃ,
 *τοὺς δὲ ἰδὼν γήθησεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
 *χαίρων οὐνεκ ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο.

The latter passage, which I have composed from standard descriptions of joy encountered in the Homeric poems,⁵ differs from *Odyssey* 8.78 in that it expresses the same idea without involving the above peculiarities: it has neither necessary enjambment nor hiatus, and the semantically irregular χαῖρε νόῳ is absent. In a word, it is more technically correct than the authentic Homeric passage.

One can see that the amendment which I proposed differs from the Homeric text at three points: it omits the expression ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν at v. 77; the imperfect tense is replaced by the aorist; and the expression χαῖρε νόῳ is missing. As the difference between the imperfect and aorist is rather immaterial in the context under discussion, only the expressions χαῖρε νόῳ and ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν can be seriously considered as Homer's motive for the deviation. That is to say, it was important to the poet to emphasize either (a) that Agamemnon rejoiced in one of his mental organs and that this mental organ would be his *noos*, or (b) that Odysseus and Achilles attacked each other 'with violent words'.

Yet, while it is true that the addition of a mental organ emphasizes the fact that the joy experienced by Agamemnon was an inner rather than an overt one, it may be doubted whether such an addition was absolutely indispensable. Thus, although in the second part of the *Odyssey* there is more than one occasion on which Homer depicts the inner joy of the disguised Odysseus, he regularly does this simply by using the verb γηθέω.⁶ Descriptions of joy involving mental organs constitute only about one-fourth of the descriptions of joy in Homer:⁷ in all the other cases Homer simply uses the verbs χαίρω and γηθέω without further qualification. In view of this it is reasonable to suppose that in the majority of cases the addition of mental organs to Homer's descriptions of joy and other emotions was meant to answer metrical rather than semantical requirements.

Furthermore, it may well be doubted whether the question as to in which mental organ Agamemnon's joy should be located was of any importance to Homer. This is made especially clear from the fact that in the case of χαῖρε νόῳ at

instance falls into the 'harsh' type of necessary enjambment, that is, the one in which a sense-unit is not complete within the verse.

⁵ For a list of such expressions, see ch. 4.

⁶ See *Od.* 13.250 and esp. 18.281.

⁷ Out of 106 occurrences of the verb χαίρω registered in Gehring 1891, s.v., only 20 involve mental organs; in the case of γηθέω, the ratio is 46 to 12.

the beginning of the hexameter it was metrically impossible to employ one of the mental organs usually combined with the verbs of joy: instead of $\sim -$ required in this position (and supplied, at the expense of hiatus, by νόω), θυμῷ would have given $- -$; φρενί / φρεσί, scanned $\sim \sim$, though capable of making the last syllable long by position, is excluded because it would have lengthened the preceding syllable; and κηρί would have given $- \sim$. In view of this, χαῖρε νόω looks like an emergency solution prompted by the metrical context rather than the poet's deliberate choice.

In view of the aforesaid, it may be suggested that Homer was maneuvered into the phrase ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων / χαῖρε νόω by his insertion of the expression ἐκπάγλοιο' ἐπέεσσιν in the first part of v. 77. Undoubtedly, ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων in the second part of the verse, like any other formula containing a hero's name, is one of the most regular Homeric usages.⁸ No less regular is the combination of such a formula with a verb of joy, for the most part γηθέω, placed in the first half of the hexameter.⁹ In our case, however, since the first part of the verse was already occupied by the expression ἐκπάγλοιο' ἐπέεσσιν, room was left only for the Agamemnon formula in the second part of the verse. Consequently, the predicate expressing the idea of Agamemnon's rejoicing was transferred into the following line—a practice which is usual in sentences which do not begin after the bucolic diaeresis.¹⁰ That the poet preferred using the verb χαίρω in this specific position may be explained by the fact that the participle χαίρων is habitually used in the first foot for amplifying a sentence after the unperiodic enjambment.¹¹ But the imperfect χαῖρε scanned $- \sim$ is much more problematic in this position than the self-contained χαίρων scanned $- -$, which would have permitted the poet, by means of a connective such as οὖνεκα (see *Od.* 8.199–200, adduced in n. 11), to embark safely on the phrase ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο at the end of the second foot. Instead of this, he had to amplify the imperfect χαῖρε by adding, as usual in such situations, the location of joy in one of the mental organs. As the metrical position itself was unusual, none of the

⁸ 37 times in both epics, see *MHV* 39, Table I.

⁹ See, e.g., *Il.* 6.212, 8.278, 17.567; *Od.* 7.329, 8.199, 13.250, 18.281. See also above, ch. 4.

¹⁰ In his study of Homeric enjambment, M.W. Edwards 1966, 170–75, showed that enjambment in sentences beginning after the bucolic diaeresis differs from the other kinds of enjambment in that in such cases the verse-end involves no break in sense: these in fact are syntactic units which are deeply rooted in the Homeric technique of verse-making.

¹¹ See esp. *Od.* 8.199–200 γήθησεν δὲ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς, / χαίρων οὖνεχ' κτλ.; cf. *Il.* 23.555–56 μείδησεν δὲ ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς / χαίρων and *Od.* 13.250–51 γήθησεν δὲ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς / χαίρων.

mental organs usually employed in such cases could fit into it. This is how the irregular χαῖρε νόῳ seems to have originated.

It is worth keeping in mind that there are weighty arguments in favour of the view that the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, the subject of the song of Demodocus to the description of which the lines under discussion belong, is Homer's innovation modelled on the description of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon at the beginning of the *Iliad*.¹² Now it is reasonable to suppose that the newly invented subject would not be narrated by the poet in the same manner as the traditional one. The poet presenting a given subject for the first time cannot be absolutely certain how his verses will be shaped several lines ahead, that is, how a word or an expression used in a given verse, traditional though it might be in itself, would influence words and expressions which follow it. As we saw above, this seems to have been the case with the expression ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν at *Odyssey* 8.77. But why was it important to the poet to say that Odysseus and Achilles attacked each other 'with violent words'? Traditional though it probably is, ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν is a rare expression, whose only other occurrence is at *Iliad* 15.198, in the description of a quarrel among the Olympians. Could it, as the anonymous referee suggests to me, be a reminiscence of 'the terrific eloquence of the quarrel in *Iliad* 1'? As was noticed long ago, one such reminiscence, Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλᾶς at v. 82, evokes the words Διὸς δ' ἔτελείετο βουλή by which the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles is introduced at *Iliad* 1.5. However this may be, it is highly likely that it was the introduction of this specific expression that resulted in the chain reaction of metrical and other irregularities characteristic of the passage under discussion.

2

Let us consider now *Odyssey* 1.346–50, Telemachus' rebuke to Penelope:

μητρὲρ ἐμή, τί τ' ἄρα φθονέεις ἐρίηρον ἀοιδὸν
τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται; οὐ νύ τ' ἀοιδοὶ
αἴτιοι, ἀλλὰ ποθὶ Ζεὺς αἴτιος, ὅς τε δίδωσιν
ἀνδράσιν ἀλφειστῆσιν ὅπως ἐθέλησιν ἐκάστω.
τοῦτ' οὐδ' οὐ νέμεσις Δαναῶν κακὸν οἶτον αἰδεῖν.

'Mother, why do not you allow this accomplished bard to please us, whatever be the direction in which his mind urges him? It is not the bards who are responsible: Zeus, methinks,

¹² See. Marg 1956; von der Mühl 1940, 718, 45–48, and below, ch. 11 (with bibliography).

is responsible, who gives to toiling men whatever he wishes for each. It is not wrong for him to sing of the sad doom of the Danaans’.

The primary object of my attention here is vv. 347–48. Like the passage discussed above, these lines are also characterized by some minor irregularities, all of them in v. 347: ὅππῃ οἱ, which should almost certainly count as a long vowel in hiatus;¹³ necessary enjambment after οὐ νότ’ ἀοιδοί; and, again, inappropriate use of *noos*, in that this mental organ behaves here as an active ‘mover’, a function usually assigned to *thumos*. Admittedly, necessary enjambment after the bucolic diacresis is much more regular than the other kinds of necessary enjambment;¹⁴ yet, we have enjambment in the next verse as well, and this, together with multiple syntactic stops within vv. 347–48, produces a certain harshness of scanning and locution which is not dissimilar to that observed in the passage discussed in Section 1.

However, all these peculiarities come out with special force if we compare this passage with another passage of similar content, *Odyssey* 8.43–45:

καλέσασθε δὲ θεῖον ἀοιδόν,
Δημόδοκον· τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς περὶ δῶκεν ἀοιδὴν
τέρπειν, ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν ἀείδειν.

‘And summon also the divine bard Demodocus, because to him more than to any other the god gave the song to please us whatever be the direction in which his spirit encourages him to sing’.

The formulaic affinity of τέρπειν, ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν ἀείδειν at *Odyssey* 8.45 and τέρπειν ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται at *Odyssey* 1.347 is obvious. It is also obvious which of the two phrases should be considered traditional. Indeed, *Odyssey* 8.45, a full hexameter long and free of irregularities, is deeply rooted in epic diction, not to mention the fact that *thumos* appears here in its standard role of the internal ‘mover’. The fact that *Odyssey* 8.45 serves as part of a general characteristic of the Phaeacian bard Demodocus also gives us reason to consider it a formulaic expression cast for general description of the Homeric singer’s activity.

¹³ Insofar as it is unlikely that *Od.* 1.347, nontraditional as it is in more than in one respect, could have been created before the disappearance of the digamma. For further discussion see Hoekstra 1965, 64–65.

¹⁴ Parry in *MHV* 264, cf. n. 10 above. Unfortunately, in his statistical study of Homeric enjambment Kirk supplies no figures concerning this specific type. But, as Kirk himself admits, the differences between his conclusions and those of Parry ‘are not alarming’, see Kirk 1966, 119.

Obviously, the formulaic line *τέρπειν, ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν αἰδεῖν* was broken in *Odyssey* 1 in order to introduce the idea that it is Zeus rather than the poets who is to be held responsible for the content of the poets' songs, in that he has caused the events of which they sing to occur. For this purpose, the regular *ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν* was abridged to the irregular *νόος ὄρνυται*, a transformation which in its turn caused hiatus and necessary enjambment. But could not the same idea have been expressed by other, more conventional, means? Let us try again to amend the Homeric verses:

μη̣τερ ἐμή, τί τ' ἄρα φρονέεις ἐρίηρον αἰιδόν
 τέρπειν, ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν αἰδεῖν; (= *Od.* 8.45)
 τούτῳ δ' οὐ νέμεσις Δαναῶν κακὸν οἶτον αἰδεῖν·
 τὸν δὲ θεοὶ μὲν τεύξαν, ἐπεκλώσαντο δ' ὄλεθρον (= *Od.* 8.579)
 ἀνθρώποις, ἵνα ᾗσι καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν αἰιδή.¹⁵ (= *Od.* 8.580)

'Mother, why do not you allow this accomplished bard to please us, whatever be the direction in which his spirit encourages him to sing? It is not wrong for him to sing of the sad doom of the Danaans: the gods wrought it, they spun the destruction for mortals, in order that there be a song for men thereafter'.

The idea that the gods fashion human fates which eventually become the subjects of songs is well attested in the epics.¹⁶ Yet *Odyssey* 1 supplies what looks like a unique variation on this idea, in that it turns it into an apology for bards (*aoidoi*), who are not to blame for the content of their songs because these only relate what really happened. Accordingly, it can be suggested that the poet's deviation from the traditional pattern was caused by his desire to express this idea.¹⁷ As the poet could not be sure of the final form his newly invented apology for the poets would take, he tried to introduce it as early as possible at the expense of the traditional expression, without considering that this idea could be expressed just as well by traditional means.

It goes without saying that it is also possible to take into account other reasons that could have caused the poet's deviations from the traditional models at

¹⁵ On the Atticism in ᾗσι see Hainsworth in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 394: 'ᾗσι as it stands is an Atticism. ἔησι would be a trivial correction, restoring both dialect and smooth metre'. I am grateful to Ra'anana Meridor for drawing my attention to this form.

¹⁶ Cf. *Il.* 6.357–58, *Od.* 8. 577–80 and below, ch. 13.

¹⁷ Another unique idea concerning the role of poetry emerges immediately after the quoted passage: Phemius' song should not be interrupted also because the most-praised songs are those whose contents are new to the audience, see *Od.* 1.351–52, cf. Finkelberg 1998, 93–95.

his disposal.¹⁸ Still, it seems not to be mere coincidence that the metrical and formulaic irregularities observed above are found in those parts of the Homeric text which are innovatory in their content. As Jasper Griffin put it, 'It will seem reasonable to think that the singers had to do more inventing when they dealt with a subject-matter rarely depicted, or rarely depicted at such length, in the tradition'.¹⁹ If this is correct, then metrical and formulaic irregularities like those observed here should be regarded as by-products of the poet's creative intervention in the traditional idiom. This seems to be a reasonable explanation of the fact that, although the poet could have expressed both the idea of Agamemnon's joy and that of Zeus' responsibility for the poets' songs by traditional means, in both cases he gave his own, technically less satisfactory, variations of traditional patterns purporting to express the ideas in question.

3

In *Les Formules et la métrique d'Homère* Parry describes the situation of a poet committing a metrical fault:

The bard, accustomed to expressing his thought through the medium of traditional expressions, will often have to choose between using two formulae which perfectly express his thought but whose junction entails a metrical fault, and renouncing formulae to make up expressions of his own.²⁰

As Parry believed that the second option was only relevant to 'a poet of an individual style', and as he did not hold Homer to be such a poet, his study of metrical irregularities in Homer dealt with the first option only. Yet neither *Odyssey* 8.77–78 nor *Odyssey* 1.347–48, though they undoubtedly display formulaic associations of various kinds, can be accounted for as resulting from the processes of modification and juxtaposition of formulae analysed by Parry. In Parry's terms, these verses belong to 'a poet of an individual style'. But the irregularities found in the two passages discussed here can hardly be seen as having something extraordinary about them. Approximately 23% of the Homeric verses contain necessary enjambment, -ω stands long in hiatus 23% percent of the time, and -η 19%.²¹ The same seems to be true also of the nonformulaic expressions such as

¹⁸ Some of these reasons are discussed above, in ch. 3 and below, in ch. 9.

¹⁹ Griffin 1995, 34.

²⁰ *MHV* 196.

²¹ Kirk 1966, 119; Monro 1882, 356; cf. *MHV* 192 and n. 1.

χαῖρε νόω and νόος ὄρνυται: as I have argued elsewhere, the proportion of such expressions in Homeric diction is about 30%.²² Thus, if we are indeed dealing here with the features of an individual style, such a style must have played a considerable part in the Homeric diction.

It is unlikely that *Odyssey* 8.77–78 or *Odyssey* 1.347–48, replaceable as they are by more regular alternatives from the stock of traditional expressions, could survive the transmission. Consequently, these verses ‘of an individual style’ must have belonged to ‘Homer’ or whoever was the poet responsible for our version of the *Odyssey*. To prove that the conclusions arrived at in the case of two Homeric passages must be valid for all other such cases as well, it is not necessary to seek for more regular alternatives to every anomalous Homeric usage. The evidence is provided by the simple fact that Homer’s formulaic expressions as a rule contain neither metrical nor semantic irregularities like those discussed in this paper. This is not to say of course that Homer contributed to epic diction only by creating irregular expressions. But, though we can safely suppose that Homer did create new expressions in accordance with the rules of traditional diction, the very traditional character of such innovations makes their identification within the epic corpus difficult if not impossible.²³ Paradoxically enough, it is in the less technically perfect passages that the *ipsissima verba* of Homer are easier to discern.

²² See ch. 4, 37–43.

²³ For an attempt for such identification see below, ch. 10.

6 Oral Theory and the Limits of Formulaic Diction

Introduction

It has been pointed out more than once that the theory of formulaic composition in the form originally given it by Milman Parry is far from homogeneous.¹ Not only chronologically but also in content Parry's studies of the Homeric formulae fall into two parts: the French publications of the 1920s and the American publications of the 1930s. In the former, Parry showed, first, that there are formulae and formulaic systems in Homer, and second, that they are characterized by extension and economy. He identified the style he thus described as 'traditional'. It is only in the American publications of the 1930s that he introduced the hypothesis that the formulaic character of Homeric style is to be explained by its being the characteristic style of oral composition. A by-product of this development was that for all practical purposes 'oral' became identified with 'formulaic': this gave rise to the widespread view that one-hundred-percent orality amounts to one-hundred-percent formulaicity. From then on, to claim that Homeric diction is an oral traditional one has become equivalent to claiming that all of Homer consists of formulae.

As is well known to every student of Homer, neither Parry's definition of formula nor the rules of repetition, economy and extension that he introduced would apply equally to all Homeric expressions. This fact became obvious to Parry himself as soon as he moved from noun-epithet combinations to other parts of Homeric diction. A partial solution that he proposed was, first, to introduce the notion of the so-called 'formulaic expressions', that is, such modifications of the traditional formulae that adapt them to situations not provided for in the poet's stock of traditional phrases; and, second, to approach all the unique expressions that cannot be accounted for in this way as underrepresented formulae. But even when both formulaic expressions and underrepresented formulae are taken into account, this would not change the fact that, insofar as one proceeds from Parry's definition of the formula, the claim that 100% of Homer is formulaic is highly problematic.

A priori, there were two ways out of this difficulty: (a) to abandon the idea of 100% formulaicity in Homer; (b) to loosen the criteria for identifying the basic unit

¹ See, e.g., Hoekstra 1965, 10–12; Holoka 1991, 457–60; Sale 1996, 377; Foley 1997, 147–49; Bakker 1999, 166–67.

of Homeric composition so that they may apply equally to all Homeric expressions. Yet, insofar as in the minds of most scholars 'oral' became equivalent to 'formulaic', adopting (a) would have amounted to recognizing that while some parts of Homer are oral others are not. This is why both Parry himself and his disciples A.B. Lord and J.A. Notopoulos chose the other option, with most of the Parryists following their lead. As a result, not only single words regularly placed in the same metrical positions but also recurring syntactic and phonic patterns not identical in their wordings gradually began to be treated as formulae. Soon enough, the tendency to stretch the definition of the formula so that it may apply equally to all Homeric expressions began to be felt unsatisfactory by many. This led to the efforts, discussed in detail below, to replace the formula with another, more flexible, unit of composition.

In all this, it has largely been overlooked that abandoning the original definition of the formula while preserving the thesis of the oral character of Homeric composition inevitably leads to a fallacy, for the simple reason that the only foundation we have for the hypothesis of oral composition of the Homeric poems is the Homeric formula as identified by Parry.² This fallacy is characteristic of those recent developments in Homeric scholarship that seek to modify the formula in such a way that it becomes replaced by other entities that are ostensibly more apt to supply a unified explanation for the totality of the Homeric text. In Section I, I will dwell on two such developments, both of them issuing from the application of contemporary linguistic theories to the phenomenon of Homeric language—the 'generative approach' launched by Michael Nagler and the 'nucleus-periphery' theory introduced by Edzard Visser and further developed by Egbert Bakker. In Section II, I will try to examine the possibilities offered by the alternative view, namely, that the text of Homer does not lend itself to a uniform explanation in terms of the formulaic theory.

² The Parry-Lord theory of oral composition differs from the other theories of oral transmission of the Homeric poems—such as, for example, the memorization theory, posited as a basis for an oral Homer long before Parry—in that it approaches the oral traditional poem, or the 'song', as being composed anew at the time of performance. On memorization see esp. Pelliccia 2003; cf. below, 185–87.

Revisionist Approaches to Oral-Formulaic Theory

Nagler, whose approach was closely associated with the generative linguistics of Noam Chomsky, adopted the tendency, first introduced by Parry himself, of loosening the criteria for identification of the formula, and took it further. He famously proposed ‘to abandon the word “formula”, which means different things to different people, in favor of an entirely new concept’.³ This new concept was that of a ‘preverbal Gestalt’, or an underlying deep structure actualized in the surface structures of the spoken language.⁴ Technically, this meant that, in addition to the semantic and metrical criteria on the basis of which the formula had originally been identified by Parry (‘an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea’),⁵ the generative approach introduced an additional criterion, that of resemblance in sound, thus turning the formula into ‘a highly suggestive associative pattern of sound and sense’ or, as one of Nagler’s followers had it, ‘the nexus of rhythmic, phonic, and thematic associations’.⁶

It is immediately obvious that what we have here is not so much two different interpretations of the formula as two different concepts of what should be taken as the basic unit of Homeric composition. According to Parry’s original definition of the formula, such a unit should be identified on metrical and semantic grounds, whereas Nagler identified his basic unit on the grounds of rhythmic, semantic, and phonic criteria. The result was not just a modification of Parry’s original definition of the formula but an entirely different concept of the process of formulaic composition. This becomes especially obvious as one proceeds from the minimal unit of a formula to formulaic systems, the larger categories into which Parry’s formulae are organized.

The formulaic system is a group of expressions of varying metrical shape, specialized for rendering a given idea under various metrical conditions. In that they make it possible for the poet to express the idea he needs in various parts of the hexameter, the formulaic systems can justly be treated as the central core of formulaic composition. Thus, for example, the idea ‘one’s *thumos* (“spirit”) orders one to do something’ is covered by the following series of formulae running from the beginning of the verse up to the bucolic diaeresis:

3 Nagler 1974, 11.

4 Nagler 1967, 282–83.

5 *MHV* 13.

6 Nagler 1974, 4; A. Edwards 1988, 25.

¹— ∪ ∪ /²— ∪ ∪ /³θυμός ἐνὶ στήτεσσι κελεύει (9x)

¹— ∪ ∪ /²— ∪ ∪ /³— κραδίη θυμός τε κελεύει (6x)

¹— ∪ ∪ /²— ∪ ∪ /³— ∪ ∪ /⁴— κέλεται δέ με θυμός (3x)

¹— ∪ ∪ /²— ∪ ∪ /³— ∪ ∪ /⁴— ∪ ∪ /⁵θυμός ἀνώγει (17x).

We can see that the formulaic system at the poet's disposal allows him, by employing two synonymous verbs, *κελεύω* and *ἄνωγα*, to express the idea 'one's *thumos* orders one to do something' in any part of the verse. Now such a system can never be arrived at on the basis of Nagler's criteria, for the simple reason that the verbs *κελεύω* and *ἄνωγα* neither resemble each other in respect of sound nor necessarily occupy the same part of the verse. According to the criteria of the generative approach, the expression *θυμός ἀνώγει*, '*thumos* commands', would rather belong to the same category as, say, *θυμός ἀγήνωρ*, '*manly thumos*', which resembles it phonetically and is usually found in the same metrical position. That is to say, the significative value of the formula, essential as it is to Parry's theory of formulaic composition, plays practically no part in Nagler's taxonomy.⁷

What is at issue here is not just a difference between two taxonomies. Parry's classification of the formulae on the basis of meaning was introduced not for its own sake but in order to explain the process of Homeric composition. Following the formulaic systems that he discovered, one will eventually arrive at a general picture of how the poet expresses a given idea using a limited number of differently shaped expressions that are close in their meanings.⁸ But what would our concept of the process of Homeric composition be like if we follow Nagler's units? The answer is that the introduction of the criterion of sound transforms Parry's unit of signification into an associative pattern in which signification plays only a subordinate role. Proceeding from such patterns we shall arrive, at best, at something on a par with associative lyrics, but never at narrative poetry.

This is not to say, of course, that the associative patterns beyond meaning do not exist or take no part in composition. However, to take them as units of composition is to ignore the fact that any composition is eventually a process of selection out of the infinite number of possibilities, including those offered by associations emerging in the poet's mind. Whatever such associations may be, it is reasonable to suppose that the poet would choose only such that are semantically

⁷ As Sale 1996, 398 n. 27, points out, the factor of sound was first introduced by Parry himself in his 1930 article 'Homer and the Homeric Style'. However, the full text of the passage to which Sale refers makes it clear that Parry saw the factor of sound as not applicable to formulaic systems, and therefore as subordinate to the factor of meaning, see *MHV* 323: 'Here it [the sound] has followed the thought which the singers wished to express'.

⁸ As was done, for example, in Jahn 1987.

appropriate (which would of course be true of associative lyrics as well). To claim that the poet would behave otherwise amounts to claiming that it made no difference to him whether it was θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ or θυμὸς ἀνώγει that emerged whenever he intended to say ‘one’s *thumos* orders one to do something’. In other words, the associations favoured by the partisans of the generative approach are subordinate to the process of signification, and it is above all the significative value of such associations that controls their actualization or non-actualization in epic diction.

Again, least of all do I intend to claim that associative patterns beyond meaning do not exist or deserve no scholarly attention. Yet, though they can certainly throw light on unconscious processes in the poet’s mind, these patterns cannot effectively account for the process of Homeric composition. Studying the associative patterns and the psychological processes they imply is quite a different discipline, with a different unit to proceed from and objectives other than those pursued by Parry. That is to say, what is being dealt with here is not just a modification of Parry’s original hypothesis nor even a far-reaching revision of it, but the introduction of an alternative hypothesis as regards the nature of Homeric composition. Yet, in so far as it purports to account for the oral character of Homeric composition without at the same time adopting the identification of the formula on which the idea of oral composition is founded, this is a hypothesis that suffers from *petitio principii*.

Nagler’s approach to Homeric formulae was especially influential in the 1970s and 1980s. In the late 1980s and 1990s, oral-formulaic theory was taken in a different direction by Visser and Bakker, who approached Homeric diction as first and foremost an act of communication and its stuff as ‘information to be versified by the epic singer’.⁹ Thus, in an article summarizing the analysis of phrases of the type ‘A killed B’ that he carried out in his 1987 dissertation, Visser wrote:

Homer did not use given word-blocks, his basis rather was the semantically functional single-word, which cannot be replaced by any other. In the process of versification in the imaginative rhythmical structure called ‘hexameter’ ... he proceeded in such a way that he first placed the semantically most important elements (in our example: the personal names) and then adapted to this basic structure material whose semantic content is likewise indispensable, but whose prosodic scheme is variable (in our example: the verb-forms and conjunctions).¹⁰

⁹ Bakker 1999, 174, 169.

¹⁰ Visser 1988, quoted from de Jong 1999, 376. See also Visser 1987.

Visser's theory was taken further in a 1991 article by Bakker and F. Fabbricotti, who applied it to phrases of the type 'A killed B with a spear'. According to their modification of Visser's theory, the verbs of killing should be regarded as nuclear in respect of such expressions as, for example, the dative 'with spear'. When approached in this way, all the elements of Homeric diction would fall into one of the following categories: (a) the semantically functional 'nucleus', without which the act of communication cannot take place, and (b) the semantically neutral 'periphery', which is subordinate to the nucleus in that its essential function is 'verse-technical'; it is here that the Homeric formulae belong. Bakker and Fabbricotti write in this connection:

Peripheral elements are semantically neutral in that they may just be present or absent, there being no difference for the intended meaning of the combination nucleus-periphery. This is the logical consequence of the notion of peripherality: a peripheral element is peripheral precisely because it may be absent without more ado. And when it is present, it serves primarily a verse-technical, rather than a semantic role.¹¹

Although nobody would deny that Homeric diction delivers meaningful messages that in the last analysis rely on the rules of ordinary speech,¹² it is highly doubtful that its primary function was to serve as a means of communication, or at least a means of communication in the straightforward sense ascribed to it in the nucleus-periphery theory. Thus, in contemporary literary theory the language of art is approached as an act of communication *sui generis*, in which the artistic form is possessed of a special communicative function which is complementary to the communicative function of ordinary speech.¹³ As far as Homer is concerned, it is above all what John Miles Foley defined as the 'traditional referentiality' of the Homeric language that fulfils this special communicative function:

... a language marked by its archaisms and dialect mixture, as well as by its own distinctive array of 'words', becomes the dedicated medium for the composition and reception of the poems. In its very idiosyncrasy, long misunderstood as a curious blend of forms fossilized into convenient building blocks, lies the secret to its success as a signifying instrument. This 'way of speaking' designates a channel for communication, a precise wavelength for both the making and the receiving of Homeric epic. Far from being a limitation or an awkward hindrance that leads to a nodding Homer, it is a uniquely empowering medium, full of traditional implication at every level.¹⁴

¹¹ Bakker and Fabbricotti 1991, quoted from de Jong 1999, 385.

¹² See esp. recent work by Bakker 1997, M.W. Edwards 2002, and Minchin 2001.

¹³ See, e.g., Lotman 1977.

¹⁴ Foley 1997, 170; see also Foley 1991, 38–60.

Characteristically, the unit from which Visser proceeds is that of a single line commensurate with a sentence containing both the names of the killer and the killed and the verb of killing. Bakker and Fabbriotti extend this unit also to such cases where an expression ‘with spear’ is placed in enjambment, that is, when it ‘fills the remaining first half of the verse in a situation where the second half is to be filled by the metrical determinants (the names of the victor and his victim)’, as for example in the phrase Πιδύτην δ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς Περκώσιον ἐξενάρειεν / ἔγχει χαλκείῳ (*Il.* 6.30–31 ‘And Odysseus slew Pidytes, a man from Perkote, / with his spear of bronze’).¹⁵ The fact however is that Homeric descriptions of the act of killing are far from constrained by this format. Consider for example the following passage, which is quite typical of such descriptions:

τὸν δὲ πεσόντ’ ἐλέησεν ἀρηϊφίλος Λυκομήδης,
 στῇ δὲ μάλ’ ἐγγὺς ἰὼν, καὶ ἀκόντισε δουρὶ φαεινῷ,
 καὶ βάλεν Ἴππασίδην Ἀπισάονα ποιμένα λαῶν
 ἦπαρ ὑπὸ πραπίδων, εἴθαρ δ’ ὑπὸ γούνατ’ ἔλυσεν.

When he fell the warrior *Lycomedes* felt pity for him:
 Going in close he took his stand and *cast with his shining spear*,
And hit Apisaon, Hippiasus’ son, shepherd of the people,
 In the liver under the midriff, *and instantly collapsed his strength*.¹⁶

The act of killing is described here in four consecutive lines, of which the first delivers the name of the killer; the second introduces the act of hitting with a spear; the third gives the name of the killed; and the fourth refers to the act of killing as such. That is to say, not only is each of the so-called metrical determinants placed in a separate line but even the metrically variable and ‘peripheral’ elements, the verb of killing and the expression ‘with spear’, are each provided with a separate line of its own. It is difficult to see how such a lavish elaboration on the message ‘Lycomedes killed Apisaon’ could have resulted from verse-technical constraints on the part of a poet communicating a given piece of information. In other words, there is good reason to believe that Homer was possessed of much greater liberty in describing the act of killing than the ‘nucleus-periphery’ theory would allow.

Furthermore, if we look at the entire gamut of Homer’s descriptions of killing and wounding, the hierarchy of the nucleus and the periphery, which worked rather well on the level of a single verse-sentence, will be reversed. Rather often

¹⁵ Bakker and Fabbriotti 1991, quoted from de Jong 1999, 384.

¹⁶ *Il.* 17.346–49, transl. M. Hammond (my emphasis). Cf. also *Il.* 5.610–17, where Ajax kills Amphiios, or *Il.* 11.575–79, where Eurypylos kills Apisaon.

than not it is the formulaic patterns for throwing the spear, hitting the shield, and so on, that are invariable, whereas the names of the participants vary. Thus, expressions of the type καὶ βάλε(ν) Ἀτρεΐδαι (Πριαμίδαο, Τυδεΐδαι, Αἰνείαι, Ἀρήτοιο, κτλ.) κατ' ἄσπιδα πάντοσ' εἶσιν ('and he hit the all-round shield of the son of Atreus/Priam/Tydeus' or 'of Aeneas/Aretos') are obviously specialized for incorporating as many names as possible into the formulaic pattern describing the act of hitting someone's shield.¹⁷ In cases such as these, the 'nucleus', i.e. the name of the man hit, would be subordinate to the 'periphery', i.e. the formulaic patterns describing the act of hitting.

The main problem of the 'nucleus-periphery' theory as I see it is the uncritical transferring of communicative aspects of ordinary speech to the language of poetry. It is not difficult to discern, however, that extrapolating the entire style of Homer from the unit on which the nucleus-periphery theory is based would result in a telegraph-like report of war casualties rather than the Homeric battle scenes as we know them. Small wonder, therefore, that the nonformulaic expressions are the only part of Homeric diction that the theory would effectively account for. Both the one-line expressions of the type 'A killed B' studied by Visser and the so-called 'expressions with referential potential', that is, those using the word 'spear' beyond the standard situations prescribed by the battle scenes, studied by Bakker and Fabbricotti, belong to this category. All the rest is a huge periphery—a noise in the channel of communication, as it were—which is of no use in delivering nuclear information of any kind whatsoever. But this is exactly the sphere in which the poetic language of Homer or indeed any poetic language resides. In other words, the claim that all of Homer consists of nucleus and periphery, correct as it may well be on a purely linguistic level, does not do justice to the poetic style of Homer.

Just as in the case of the generative approach, the exponents of the nucleus-periphery theory proceed from the assumption of the oral character of Homeric composition without at the same time supplying an independent hypothesis by which this assumption could be substantiated. Yet, insofar as the theory seeks to replace the formulae, which are after all the only foundation available for the hypothesis of oral composition, by alternative units of composition that are identified on entirely different grounds, the assumption of the oral character of Homeric composition is left unsupported in this theory as well.

¹⁷ *Il.* 3.347, 356; 5.281; 7.250; 17.517; 20.274.

The Applicability of the Theory of Formulaic Composition

More than anything else, the ease with which revisionist approaches to the Homeric formula have succeeded in replacing traditional Parryism in the minds of so many scholars is indicative of the fact that traditional Parryism itself is undergoing a major crisis. Paradoxically enough, it is one of the most important contributions to the Parry-Lord hypothesis since *L'Épithète traditionnelle* that has been mainly responsible for this development. I mean *The Flexibility of Homeric Formula* by J.B. Hainsworth (1968).

Hainsworth's application of Parry's concept of formula to noun-epithet combinations that are not proper names, which had been treated only incidentally in Parry's work, brought about several significant results. First, Hainsworth showed that the introduction of additional qualifications, which necessarily emerge when a given hypothesis' scope of evidence becomes considerably enlarged, renders Parry's hypothesis applicable to common nouns as well. This important conclusion has generally been overlooked. Second, he showed that Homer's diction is much more subtle and rich a phenomenon than could be inferred from the evidence of proper names. There was nothing in this conclusion to undermine the essentials of Parry's theory, and the extremely rich formulaic variations discovered by Hainsworth could be accounted for perfectly well along the lines of Parry's concept of formulaic modifications. True, Hainsworth's evidence demonstrated that there was an urgent need for a large-scale revision of the original concept of formulaic modification, but this is one of those things that happen when a hypothesis is being effectively developed. All this could have made the study of Homer's formulaic language even more rewarding; instead, the most conspicuous impact of Hainsworth's work has been general bewilderment and the distinct impression that something is fundamentally wrong with Parry's hypothesis.

The revisionist atmosphere that became dominant after the appearance of Hainsworth's book has made most Homeric scholars overlook another significant consequence issuing from the application of the theory of formulaic composition to expressions that are not proper nouns. Namely, the studies of both Hainsworth and Arie Hoekstra have demonstrated that, insofar as one strictly follows Parry's definition of formula, it would be hard to avoid the conclusion that the gaps in the formulaic systems are too numerous to be ascribed to the chances of representation.¹⁸ Thus, according to Hainsworth's figures, the proportion of unique expressions among noun-epithet combinations containing the common rather than

18 Hainsworth 1968, 72–73. See also Hoekstra 1965, 15–16; Pope 1963, 12–13.

the proper nouns ranges from one-third to one-half—the proportion that, as Hainsworth remarked, is ‘disturbingly high in a diction commonly supposed to be entirely formulaic’, whereas Hoekstra, proceeding from his own evidence, stated unequivocally that ‘it is practically out of the question that Homer’s diction is wholly formulaic and traditional’.¹⁹ Similar conclusions were also reached later in the studies of Mario Cantilena, W.M. Sale, and my own.²⁰ As a result, today we can claim with a considerable degree of certainty that at least one-third of the Homeric corpus consists of individual expressions, that is, expressions that are both unique and not modelled on formulaic patterns.

This brings us back to the problem of the limited applicability of the theory of formulaic composition with which I started this paper. We have seen that there are two possible solutions to this problem: either (a) to abandon the dogma of the 100% formularity of Homer; or (b) to try to save it by loosening the criteria by means of which the basic unit of Homeric composition is identified. As I hope to have shown, sticking fast to the idea of 100% formularity is not only ruinous for oral-formulaic theory, in that it leads to replacing the formula with other units thus undermining the principles on which oral-formulaic theory is based, but also fallacious, in that it sticks to the hypothesis of oral composition even after the theoretical basis for such a hypothesis has been removed. In view of this, adopting the position of those who propose to abandon the idea of 100% formularity seems to be the only methodologically valid solution at hand.

We have seen that the unwillingness to abandon the idea that all of Homer consists of formulae is mainly due to the prevailing assumption that for all practical purposes ‘oral’ is identical to ‘formulaic’. Thus, Bakker and Fabbriotti, while criticizing attempts at loosening the criteria for identification of the formula, nevertheless reject the solutions proposed by Hainsworth and Hoekstra as ‘not necessary at all and even false’, simply because ‘the way out of the problem pointed out by the above studies is to question the degree of orality and formularity in the Homeric poems’.²¹ On the other hand, scholars who, like Jasper Griffin or Rainer Friedrich, do not unreservedly support the hypothesis of the oral character of the Homeric poems, tend to use the equation between orality and formularity for questioning the extent to which the text of Homer as we have it

¹⁹ Hainsworth 1962, 66; Hoekstra 1965, 24, cf. 15–16. For figures, see Hainsworth 1964; cf. also Hainsworth 1968, 13.

²⁰ Cantilena 1982; Sale 1989; Finkelberg 1989 (= ch. 4). See also Sale 1996, 385.

²¹ Bakker and Fabbriotti 1991, quoted from de Jong 1999, 382 n. 3.

should be considered oral.²² But are the nonformulaic and the oral indeed as mutually exclusive as many are inclined to believe?

As studies of the contexts in which both the formulaic and the nonformulaic expressions emerge have shown, there is a clear functional specialization between these two categories of Homeric expressions. As distinct from the formulae and formulaic expressions, the nonformulaic expressions not only cannot be shown to be modelled on formulaic patterns but are also regularly employed in untypical narrative situations. Thus, to take my own study of Homeric expressions for joy as an example, instead of evenly covering all possible situations requiring an expression of joy, the formulaic system for this idea only provides (a) expressions that express the joy that springs from hearing or seeing something cheerful; these expressions are cast in the third person of the aorist indicative and occur in every portion of the verse; and (b) expressions that express joy as a feeling accompanying the main action; these expressions are cast in the imperfect and occur in the second half of the verse. 'All other situations in which joy might be expressed constitute one huge "gap" ... though this gap can occasionally be filled with modifications of formulaic patterns, it is most commonly filled with nonformulaic expressions: this is their primary function'.²³

Now if the function of nonformulaic expressions was to fill the gaps in the formulaic systems, this can well mean that the nonformulaic elements in Homeric diction were complementary to the formulaic ones. That is to say, just as it was convenient to the oral poet to have formulae and formulaic systems for any frequently recurring idea and standard narrative situation, so it was equally convenient to him not to overload his memory in the case of ideas and situations that do not fall into this category and to create individual expressions instead.²⁴

The comparative evidence at hand also suggests that the recognition of the fact that nonformulaic expressions are germane to Homeric diction is not incompatible with the hypothesis that the Homeric poems were orally composed. Thus, according to Sale, only about 65% of the *Wedding of Smailagić Meho* by Avdo Mededović can be considered formulaic, while J.D. Smith supplies the following figures for the Indian epic of Pabuji:

²² Griffin 1995, 32–35; Friedrich, personal communication. But see already Hoekstra 1965, 16: 'Since, then, the supposition that Homeric poetry is wholly formulaic is at all events unprovable (if not entirely unsound), it cannot lend support to the view that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are oral compositions'.

²³ Finkelberg 1989, 196 (= ch. 4, 42).

²⁴ Cf. Pope 1963, 9; Hoekstra 1965, 15–16; Hainsworth 1968, 114.

In terms of approximate percentages, this means that in two performances by two sets of epic singers who are unrelated, who live at some distance from each other, and who have never met, 23% of the text sung is held identically in common, 18% is equivalent, and 36% is composed of formulae known to both sets of performers ... Only 23% can be said to be truly unique to one or other performance.²⁵

This is not to say that comparative evidence alone can serve as conclusive proof that nonformulaic expressions belong with oral rather than literary composition. The caveat expressed by Hoekstra, perhaps the most methodologically rigorous of all students of the Homeric formula, that '[i]t is uncertain whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed orally', seems to be in place here.²⁶ Hoekstra's caveat equally concerned nonformulaic and formulaic expressions, his argument having been that the use of formulae may be characteristic of both genuinely oral composition and such literary composition that, like the *Posthomerica* of Quintus of Smyrna, worked by way of deliberate imitation of traditional technique. This part of his argument has been effectively refuted by Sale, who showed (without however specifically referring to Hoekstra) that, though Quintus did use traditional formulae, he failed to employ such a hallmark characteristic of oral composition as formulaic systems.²⁷

Defining the status of the nonformulaic expressions would require a separate examination. As far as I can see, such an examination should include, among other things, a comprehensive study of the ratio of metrical irregularities in this group of Homeric expressions. It is reasonable to suppose that the so-called metrical irregularities, frequently occurring as they do in Homer's modifications of traditional formulae, are a necessary by-product of oral composition, in that they can consistently be accounted for as resulting from the poet's need to adjust the traditional formulae to nontraditional contexts at the time of extempore composition.²⁸ It follows, then, that the presence of metrical irregularities in nonformulaic expressions can serve as a test of their orality. However that may be, the only thing of which we can be certain at this stage is that these expressions constitute an inseparable part of Homeric diction as we know it.

The ensuing vision of Homeric diction would thus be that of a continuum or, as Joseph Russo put it in his 1997 assessment that incorporated the results of re-

²⁵ Smith 1991, 26. I am grateful to David Shulman for drawing my attention to this study.

²⁶ Hoekstra 1965, 25. Cf. *ibid.*, 18: 'Of course the objections I have raised against the argument do not prove that the hypothesis is untenable. Personally I believe that it is not impossible'.

²⁷ See Hoekstra 1965, 16–17; Sale 1996.

²⁸ Cf. *MHV* 196, 237; Hoekstra 1965, 9–10; Finkelberg 1988 and 1997 (= chs. 3 and 5).

cent studies of nonformulaic elements in Homer, ‘an amalgam of elements covering a spectrum from highly formulaic to nonformulaic, a view that may be considered both unsurprising and uncontroversial’.²⁹ The alternative would be to abandon Parry’s principles of repetition, economy, and extension, meant to account for the way in which the same meaning can be rendered by a limited number of traditional expressions, and to adopt revisionist approaches whose practical usefulness for the concrete analysis of the text of Homer is far from proven.³⁰ It is too often forgotten, indeed, that the explicative value of Parry’s hypothesis of formulaic composition has proved its worth in the work of many scholars whose main pursuit was not so much the formulaic theory as such as, rather, the study of a given traditional Greek text cast in hexameters. To claim that the formulaic theory does not work insofar as it cannot be indiscriminately applied to the totality of the text of Homer is to ignore the fact that its application in the course of the last 70 years has changed the face of Homeric scholarship beyond recognition. This being the case, it would be an unforgivable mistake to abandon the approach that has contributed so much to our understanding of Homeric diction.³¹

29 Russo 1997, 259; cf. M.W. Edwards 1997, 269–72.

30 See, e.g., Russo 1997, 252, on the generative approach: ‘while the formulation makes elegant theory, it renders our concordance-compiled repetitions of limited use in finding the allomorphs of any *Gestalt*, leaving us with no investigative tool as a replacement except for each individual researcher’s “nose” for formulas’.

31 An earlier version of this paper was read at the conference ‘Oral Performance and Its Context’, held at the University of Melbourne in July 2002. I would like to express my thanks to Chris Mackie, the convenor. As far as the present version is concerned, I am much indebted to the criticism and discussion of Thomas Hubbard, Toph Marshall, and Steve Nimis. I am also grateful to Rainer Friedrich for having allowed me to read sections from his forthcoming book on Homeric formulae and to the anonymous referee of *Oral Tradition* for his/her helpful remarks.

7 More on ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ

In an article published in *Classical Quarterly* in 1986, I argued that the inner criteria of Homer's formulaic diction preclude identifying the Homeric κλέος ἄφθιτον, 'imperishable fame' (*Il.* 9.413), as a traditional formula and *a fortiori* as an inherited Indo-European expression on a par with the Vedic *śráva(s)* ... *ákṣitam*.¹ In the subsequent years, this conclusion has been hotly disputed by adherents of the hypothesis of Indo-European provenance of the expression.² However, the main objective of my 1986 article was not so much to address the history of the expression but, rather, to draw attention to the fact that the looseness with which the term 'formula' is being used often has the result that certain things are taken for granted without having undergone a proper examination. This is why I called the article 'Is ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ a Homeric formula?' rather than, say, 'Is ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ an Indo-European formula?' This is also why I referred only in passing to the expression's post-Homeric occurrences. Meanwhile, the polemics that followed the publication have considerably broadened the scope of the discussion. Especially valuable has been the contribution of Calvert Watkins, who demanded that the Homeric κλέος ἄφθιτον should be taken not only synchronically but also diachronically.³ By all standards this is a justified demand, which can only be met if we examine the expression in the context of Greek epic tradition as a whole.

ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ in Homer

In my 1986 article I drew attention to the fact that the adjective ἄφθιτον of the phrase ὤλετο μὲν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται, 'lost is my return, but my *kleos* will be imperishable', emerging in Achilles' great speech in *Iliad* 9, is used predicatively rather than attributively. This specific point, which since then has been widely accepted,⁴ was recently disputed in a polemical note of Katharina Volk. Volk bases her argument on the premise that if one construes the

¹ See ch. 1 in this volume.

² See esp. Risch 1987; A. Edwards 1988; Martin 1989, 182–83; Nagy 1990, 244–45 n. 126; Campanile 1990, 87–89; Watkins 1995, 173–78; Volk 2002 (with bibliography).

³ Watkins 1995, 173. Cf. A. Edwards 1988, 25 n. 2: 'Finkelberg's discussion of that phrase in isolation is perhaps somewhat narrow in scope'.

⁴ Also by those who do not necessarily agree with my conclusions, see A. Edwards 1988, 25; Martin 1989, 182–83; Hainsworth 1993, 117; Watkins 1995, 173.

verb ἔσται at *Iliad* 9.413 as a *verbum existentiae* with a dative of possession rather than as the copula with a dative of interest, this will automatically provide the adjective ἄφθιτον with an attributive meaning equivalent to that rendered by the English phrase ‘I will have imperishable *kleos*.’⁵ The question whether the adjective ἄφθιτον at *Iliad* 9.413 is used predicatively or attributively is of course important but not for its own sake. If the adjective is used predicatively, this will make it unlikely that the Homeric κλέος ἄφθιτον is a self-contained semantic unit. Accordingly, it would make it difficult to see it as an inherited Indo-European formula on a par with the Vedic *śráva(s) ... ákṣitam*.

While I agree with Volk that it is not critical whether we take the μοι at *Iliad* 9.413 as the dative of interest or the dative of possession,⁶ this is not yet to say that the latter option would preclude a predicative use of the adjective in question. What is true of the English syntax is not necessarily so in the case of Greek. When used as a *verbum existentiae* with the possessive dative, the verb εἶναι takes predicative constructions as naturally as the copula does, cf. e.g. such expressions as μισθὸς δε οἱ/τοι ἄρκιος ἔσται, ‘his/your reward will be adequate’ (*Il.* 10.304, *Od.* 18.358) or νῶιν ἀνήκεστος χόλος ἔσται ‘our anger will be incurable’ (*Il.* 15.217). This will become even more evident if we take into consideration such widely attested occurrences of the same construction that are completed with a noun rather than an adjective, see. e.g., ὄνομά τινι ἔστι τι, ‘one’s name is so-and-so’ (*Od.* 9.366; 19.183, 409; 24.306), or μήτηρ δέ μοι ἔστ’ Ἀφροδίτη, ‘my mother is Aphrodite’ (*Il.* 20.209).⁷ It goes without saying that taking these propositions as predicative is the only available option.

It would therefore be mistaken to claim that the interpretation of μοι ... ἔσται as a possessive construction, equivalent to the English ‘I have’, would provide sufficient support for the conclusion that the accompanying adjective is attributive rather than predicative. The rhetoric of the phrase reinforces the connection of ἄφθιτον with ἔσται and its separation from κλέος. The chiasmic order of ὅλετο

⁵ Volk 2002, 63–65.

⁶ This point was first brought to my attention by Seth Schein, who wrote to me in 1986: ‘I’ve always felt that in Homeric Greek, datives, in particular, are not amenable to strict classification, and I wonder whether “possession” is separable from “interest” as an aspect of Achilles’ (sense of his own) identity. Even if all Homeric noun-adjective formulae involve attributive adjectives (do they? must they? are any used attributively and predicatively at different times?), would it not still be possible for rhetorical emphasis in a given instance to make a particular attributive adjective be felt predicatively? This might be especially true in 9.413, if one were to accept, as I do, Adam Parry’s argument for Achilles’ κατάχρησις of traditional language elsewhere in his speech to Odysseus’. Cf. Watkins 1995, 176.

⁷ Cf. Chantraine 1953, 71.

μέν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται, with balancing phrases on either side of ἀτὰρ, singles out κλέος as a counterpart of νόστος, while ἄφθιτον ἔσται acts as a counterpart of the verb ὤλετο.⁸

At the same time, the status of the adjective was by no means the main point of my argument. I also argued that the expression κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται (a) is unique; (b) is duplicated by the formula κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται, 'kleos will never be lost', and (c) is derivative, in that it can be shown to be created out of formulaic associations involving two established formulae, κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται and ἄφθιτον αἰεί. By the criteria of formulaic analysis, this would mean that, rather than a formula proper, we are dealing with a formulaic modification created by analogy with formulae and formulaic patterns available to the poet. Yet, since not everyone seems to acknowledge that formulaic analysis can be a useful or indeed a valid tool in approaching Homeric diction, and since I am still of the opinion that the coincidence with the Vedic *śráva(s) ... ákṣitam* is in itself not sufficient for seeing in κλέος ἄφθιτον a traditional expression,⁹ it seems desirable to examine the status of κλέος ἄφθιτον in Homer according to other criteria as well.

As is well known, 'fame' is neither the sole, nor indeed the main, meaning of *kleos* in Homer. The word's proper rendering in most Homeric contexts would be 'report', 'rumour', 'repute': cf., e.g., 'What *kleos* is there in the city now?' (*Od.* 16.461), where *kleos* actually means 'news', or 'we only hear *kleos* and know nothing' (*Il.* 2.486), where its meaning is simply a 'rumour', or 'whose [Agamemnon's] heaven-reaching *kleos* is the greatest, at least now' (*Od.* 9.264), where the word's meaning is 'repute'. This is why the constant epithets by which *kleos* is accompanied make no provision for the idea of longevity: *kleos* is 'good', 'noble' (κ. ἐσθλόν 13x), 'great' (μέγα κ. 11x), 'wide' (κ. εὐρύ 7x, *Od.* only), and 'heaven-reaching' (ὕπουράνιον κ. 2x). Beside noun-epithet combinations, we also have the formula κ. οὐρανὸν ἵκει / κ. οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἰκάνει, '*kleos* reaches unto (wide) heaven', also expressing the idea of the persistence of one's *kleos* in the present rather than in the future.¹⁰ Extensiveness and goodness, not longevity, are thus the essential characteristics of *kleos* in Homer.

Note now that κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται, '*kleos* will never be lost', the only Homeric formula making provision for the perpetuation of *kleos*, is actually formulated so as to exclude the idea of its imperishability: if anything, it implies that

⁸ This specific point was suggested to me by Mark Edwards.

⁹ Cf. Watkins 1995, 173: 'It is circular to claim that κλέος ἄφθιτον is a Homeric formula simply because of its agreement with Vedic *śráva(s) ... ákṣitam*'.

¹⁰ *Il.* 8.192; *Od.* 8.74; 9.20; 19.108. For further examples, see Olson 1995, 1–23.

one's *kleos* is normally expected to perish. The same conclusion follows if we analyse the supplementary expression '*kleos* may be inextinguishable' (ἄσβεστον κλέος εἶη), which occurs twice in the *Odyssey* (4.584, 7.333). In both cases, rather than being taken for granted, the imperishability of one's *kleos* is predicated on something else: Agamemnon's *kleos* will be inextinguishable *if* Menelaus builds a tomb for him; Alcinous's fame will be inextinguishable *if* he helps Odysseus to return home—the alternative is the extinction of *kleos*, which is obviously envisaged as the norm. This is neatly paralleled in Achilles' choice in *Iliad* 9: it is only *if* Achilles stays at Troy that his *kleos* will become imperishable; otherwise, his 'noble *kleos*' will not survive. If, as a result of treating the expression as a noun-epithet combination, we take 'imperishable' as the essential characteristic of *kleos* in Homer, this and other choices of Homeric heroes will carry little weight.¹¹ It is thus the perishability rather than the imperishability of *kleos* that comes to the fore in the Homeric poems: only by fulfilling certain conditions can the Homeric hero ensure that his good reputation of the present be imperishable in the future.¹²

To recapitulate, if we take κλέος ἀφθιτον as a Homeric formula, we will have an expression which is not only unique and derivative, but also one whose meaning would disagree with the standard usage of the word *kleos* in Homer. All this being taken into account, it will be difficult to avoid the conclusion that the contention that κλέος ἀφθιτον at *Iliad* 9.413 is a self-contained expression, and a singularly ancient one at that, cannot be substantiated on the inner grounds of Homeric diction.

¹¹ This is recognized in Volk 2002, 66: 'Of course, understanding Achilles' words the way I suggest, with ἀφθιτον as attributive, means that the adjective carries somewhat less weight than when taken as predicative: if the point is not so much the imperishability of the hero's fame, but the fame itself, then the epithet ἀφθιτον is exactly that, just an epithet, albeit a particularly significant one'. This is why she argues further in the same paragraph that in *Il.* 9.415 Achilles effectively glosses κλέος ἀφθιτον, 'imperishable fame', with κλέος ἐσθλόν, 'noble fame': 'the "noble fame" that the hero loses when returning is essentially the same as the "imperishable fame" he gains when staying'. Note however that, if followed consistently, this line of argument will inevitably bring us to the paradoxical conclusion that the formula 'one's *kleos* will never be lost' has essentially the same meaning as 'one's imperishable *kleos* will never be lost'. The fact is, however, that while the *kleos* referring to a person is readily commutable with such noun-epithet combinations as 'noble *kleos*', 'wide *kleos*', or 'great *kleos*', it does not lend itself to substitution by 'imperishable *kleos*'.

¹² As far as our evidence goes, these conditions consisted in either or both of the following—building a magnificent tomb and accomplishing deeds significant enough to become the subject of song. See further Finkelberg 1998, 73–88, and below, ch. 13.

ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ in Epic Tradition

There are two other early occurrences of κλέος ἄφθιτον, both emerging in the same metrical position as κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται at *Iliad* 9.413: ἵνα οἱ κλέος ἄφθιτ[ον] εἴη ('in order that his/her fame may be imperishable') in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 70.5 M-W) and ἥος καὶ κενοῦ εἴη κλεφός ἀφθιτ[ον] αἰεῖ ('in order that he too may have fame imperishable forever') in the early sixth century BCE dedicatory inscription from Crisa (*SEG* 351). The two variants they represent, κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται / εἴη and κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ continue to reappear in Greek poetry up to the Roman period.¹³ We can see that while the pseudo-Hesiodic expression is practically identical to what we find in Homer, the inscription from Crisa shows a significant deviation from the Homeric usage, in that it treats κλέος ἄφθιτον as the direct object of the verb ἔχω.¹⁴ How should their relationship to Homer be interpreted?

The impact of Milman Parry's work on Homeric scholarship was felt, among other things, in the recognition of the fact that parallels between traditional texts can well indicate that these are independent variants of a common tradition. As far as the specific case under discussion is concerned, this would mean that we cannot rule out the possibility that, rather than simply imitating *Iliad* 9.413, κλέος ἄφθιτον εἴη at [Hesiod] fr. 70.5 is an independent manifestation of the same traditional expression. Since the alternative Homeric expression κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται is attested both in the same fragment of pseudo-Hesiod (fr. 70.7) and in other traditional poetry cast in hexameters (*H.Ap.* 156), there is good reason to suggest that κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται/εἴη and κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται are two equivalent formulae for the expression of the same basic idea. The existence of equivalent formulae as, for example, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη and θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη, is rather uncommon in Homer. It is usually taken as indicative of the fact that traditional poetry does not keep the same formula forever: owing to social changes and changes in literary taste, to the fact that a given expression may become obsolete or alter its original meaning, new formulae were constantly entering into circulation, some of them eventually replacing the old ones.¹⁵

Now if both κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται and κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται/εἴη are formulae, there is little room for doubt which of the two is the more recent. As we have seen,

¹³ See further Floyd 1980, 154–57; Volk 2002, 63–64.

¹⁴ That *kleos* as the direct object of the verb 'to have' presents a non-Homeric usage has been emphasized in Volk 2002, 65.

¹⁵ Cf. Hainsworth 1978, 145, on 'the vogue for θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη'. On equivalent formulae see also Janko 1981 and 1992, 124, 260, and below, ch. 10.

as distinct from the former, the latter is reducible to established formulae and is therefore derivative (see Section 1). In view of this we may suggest that, like *θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη*, *κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται/εἴη* is a younger formula, which began to circulate when the expression *κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται* was already in existence. The examination of *κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ*, another post-Homeric expression of the same metrical shape, allows us to understand why.

In *κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ* on the inscription from Crisa we encounter, for the first time in hexametric poetry, the adjective *ἄφθιτον*, ‘imperishable’, used as an attribute of *kleos* or, to be more precise, as part of the epithet ‘imperishable forever’; the expression is the direct object of the verb *ἔχω*. As already mentioned, this is our first example in hexametric poetry of *kleos* being construed in this way (on non-hexametric poetry see below, Section 3). The inscription from Crisa thus signals a significant shift in the meaning of the word *kleos*: as distinct from the predicative use of *ἄφθιτον* with *κλέος*, which results in the contextual meaning of the latter as ‘fame’, ‘glory’, the attributive use would presuppose ‘fame’, ‘glory’ as the principal meaning of *kleos* (see above, Section 1).

Both *κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται* and *κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ* are derivative expressions, modelled on the same formulaic patterns (see above, Section 1). Unlike the former, however, the latter does not semantically duplicate the formula *κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται* or indeed any other expression in Homer. This makes a good case for seeing *κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ* as an underrepresented formula. This also seems to give it chronological priority over the Homeric *κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται*. Namely, as far as *κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται/εἴη* is a derivative expression duplicating a well-attested formula, it might well have evolved as a reaction to the new meaning of the word *kleos* as ‘fame’, ‘glory’ and the newly coined expression *κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ* which reflected this meaning.¹⁶

It seems more than a mere coincidence that all the attestations of the phrase *κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ* which, as we have seen, must have been the first hexametric expression treating *κλέος ἄφθιτον* as a noun-epithet combination, belong to inscriptions on stone. Thus, apart from the inscription from Crisa discussed above,

¹⁶ Cf. Hainsworth 1993, 117: ‘The words stand here [in *Il.* 9.413] as subject and predicate, but that may be a grammatical modification of a formula in which the epithet, though not decorative, is attributive, cf. the Delphic inscription *GDI* 1537, Ibycus fr. 1.47 Page, and Sappho fr. 44.4 Page’. Cf. also M.W. Edwards, personal communication: ‘No MS variant, but I would not mind betting that there have been ancient singers (maybe many of them) who sang 9.413 ending *aphthiton aiei*’. Note, however, that even on this interpretation we will have to postulate a predicative proposition with the copula omitted, viz. ‘Lost is my return, but [my] *kleos* [is] imperishable forever’, rather than a noun-epithet combination.

it is plausibly conjectured for a fifth-century BCE Athenian epigram commemorating the dead of the Battle of Marathon, and for an Hellenistic inscription from Rhodes.¹⁷ Since, as I argued in my 1986 article, the primary associations of the adjective ἄφθιτος are with material objects of divine origin (see also below, Section 4), the application of this adjective to an incorporeal entity, and especially such an ephemeral one as ‘rumour’, must have been felt as semantically incongruous.¹⁸ But it is quite a different matter if ‘rumour’ is incised on stone, the very embodiment of indestructibility. The use of the still relatively new medium of writing, with its emphasis on the permanence of the words committed to it, should also be taken into account in this connection. It can be tentatively suggested, therefore, that it was such commemorative inscriptions on stone that supplied the stimulus to the semantic evolution of the expression.¹⁹

However that may be, the diachrony that suggests itself can be tentatively reconstructed as follows. The expression κλέος οὔποτ’ ὀλεῖται, ‘kleos will never be lost’, a well-attested formula occurring not only in Homer but also in the Hesiodic corpus and the Hymns and preserving the meaning of *kleos* as ‘rumour’, ‘report’, ‘repute’, was undoubtedly the traditional one. Next to appear was the expression κλέος ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ, ‘kleos imperishable forever’: it was created out of formulaic patterns readily available in hexametric poetry and purported to express the new idea of the imperishability of *kleos* in its developing meaning ‘fame’, ‘glory’. Finally, there emerged the expression κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται/εἴη κτλ., ‘kleos will be imperishable’, which was modelled on the new expression but, as distinct from it, semantically duplicated the already existing formula κλέος οὔποτ’ ὀλεῖται. As far as our evidence goes, this development took place not earlier than the second half of the seventh century BCE: if this was indeed the case,

¹⁷ See Floyd 1980, 154–55 and Volk 2002, 63.

¹⁸ See above, ch. 1, 7; cf. Floyd 1980, 136–40, 148–51; for the discussion see Nagy 1990, 244–45 n. 126.

¹⁹ In Homer the formula ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ is applied to such objects as the sceptre of Agamemnon made by Hephaestus (*Il.* 2.46, 186), the palace of Poseidon (13.22), and the throne promised by Hera to Hypnos (14.238); when used alone and not in its standard position after the bucolic diaeresis, the adjective ἄφθιτος is applied to the golden wheel-rim of Hera’s chariot (*Il.* 5.724), to the palace of Hephaestus (18.370), to the plans (μήδεα) of Zeus (24.88), and to the marvellous grapewines on the Island of Cyclops (*Od.* 9.133). Only one out of the nine cases in which ἄφθιτος is found in Homer, κλέος ἄφθιτον at *Il.* 9.413, does not belong to the sphere of divine and marvellous, and only two, κλέος ἄφθιτον again and ἄφθιτα μήδεα at 24.88, fall into the sphere of incorporeal objects. The latter is usually taken to indicate that the term’s meaning evolved from concrete to abstract, see Ebeling, s.v. ἄφθιτος: *transfertur ad ea quae mente percipiuntur*; Treu 1965, 10–12. See also above, ch. 1, n. 18.

Achilles' words 'my *kleos* will be imperishable' must have sounded boldly innovative at the time of their first appearance.

We can conclude, therefore, that even if κλέος ἄφθιτον is approached in the perspective of Greek epic tradition as a whole, there is still no way to regard it as a traditional formula. Considerations relating to the inner structure of the hexameter help us to explain why.

ΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΦΘΙΤΟΝ and the hexameter

There are two occurrences of κλέος ἄφθιτον in early poetry not cast in hexameters: Sappho 44.4 Page, κλέος ἄφθιτον at the end of a corrupted line (glyconic with dactylic expansion) whose general context is the wedding of Hector and Andromache, and Ibycus 282.47 Page, καὶ σύ, Πολύκρατες, κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔξεις, 'and you, Polycrates, will have imperishable fame' (pherecratean with dactylic expansion). In both κλέος ἄφθιτον is unmistakably a noun-epithet combination; in addition, like the inscription from Crisa, the poem of Ibycus supplies the non-Homeric construction of *kleos* with the verb 'to have'. It can be concluded, therefore, that, like the inscription from Crisa again, the meaning of *kleos* that both Sappho and Ibycus had in mind was 'fame', 'glory' rather than 'rumour', 'repute'.

As Gregory Nagy and Calwert Watkins pointed out, the fact that the metrical shape and position of κλέος ἄφθιτον, especially as attested in Sappho, suit very well the metres of lyric poetry may indicate that lyric tradition preserved the expression in its original form. To quote Watkins' assessment, written in response to my article, 'In Achilles' speech the noun phrase κλέος ἄφθιτον has been transformed; but it is syntactically and metrically intact in line-final position in Sappho 44.4 L-P, which provides metrical and formulaic testimony independent of Homer'.²⁰ As far as I can see, this suggestion makes especially good sense if taken in the context of the so-called 'coalescence-hypothesis': according to the latter, it is possible to isolate earlier non-hexametric units embedded in the Greek hexameter as we know it, and thus to trace the history of this metre to its remote origins. Significantly, all the reconstructions of this kind invariably end up with lyric metres.²¹ Now, if the lyric metres into which the hexameter can be analysed preceded the emergence of the latter, this would mean that the formulaic phraseology was originally designed to fit these metres. In that case, the development of the hex-

²⁰ Watkins 1995, 176; see also Nagy 1974, 118–39. Cf. Martin 1989, 182–83.

²¹ For discussion see Finkelberg, forthcoming.

ameter may well be envisaged in terms of uniting together of formerly independent metrical units and consolidating the traditional phraseology with which these units were originally associated into an entirely new system. Accordingly, the epic formulae, rather than being seen as directly issuing from the needs of hexametric composition, would be envisaged as having been adapted to these needs at a considerably later stage.²²

The hypothesis certainly has merit, but since neither the scope of evidence nor the criteria of analysis comparable to those we have in the case of Homer are available for the lyric tradition, the suggestion that κλέος ἄφθιτον is an ancient 'lyric' formula which was transformed in Homer and other hexametric poetry cannot be either proved or disproved from within lyric poetry itself. It is Homer again that supplies the missing evidence.

In Homer and other hexametric poetry, the proper position of the formulae possessing the metrical shape of κλέος ἄφθιτον is in the 3rd-4th feet, between the penthemimeral ('masculine') caesura and the bucolic diaeresis. Neither the shape nor the position is especially popular with Homer.²³ Nevertheless, we can register such formulae as Πρίαμος μέγας, Διὸς ἄγγελος, δόρυ χάλκεον, κλυτὰ τεύχεα, and others. Those of them that are especially in demand sometimes move further into the 4th foot, to become part of the same colon to which κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται also belongs. Thus, side by side with δόρυ χάλκεον and κλυτὰ τεύχεα in the 3rd-4th feet we have δόρυ χάλκεον ἦει/ῆκεν and κλυτὰ τεύχεα δύναι, starting at the fourth-foot caesura and reaching the verse-end. This seems to indicate that for the expressions of this metrical shape the position occupied by κλέος ἄφθιτον in *Iliad* 9 is a secondary one. It follows, then, that one can argue that κλέος ἄφθιτον is a traditional, albeit transformed, formula, only if one assumes that it had been as popular with Greek epic tradition as, say, δόρυ χάλκεον or κλυτὰ

²² The immediate conclusion following from this approach is that it is only possible to argue in favour of Indo-European origins of Greek heroic poetry if one abandons the idea that this poetry was composed in hexameters at its earliest stages. This point was emphasized in M. West 1973, 187–88: 'The argument is not conclusive; there is nothing inherently unlikely in the idea that the Greek had heroic poetry of some sort in the first half of the second millennium. However, it would not have been in hexameters.'

²³ Only four proper noun-epithet combinations occur in both epics, see Hainsworth 1968, 6; better attested are common noun-epithet combinations, see Hainsworth 1962, 57–68, quoted from Latacz 1979, 382–83 (the category of κλυτὰ τεύχεα) and Hainsworth 1968, 44–45 (the category of δόρυ μείλιον). M.W. Edwards 1966, 117 n. 3, points out that 'the adjective μέγας, in particular, is often ... added to a name or noun to extend it forwards to the C caesura [= bucolic diaeresis] (Πρίαμος μέγας, τρίποδα μέγαν, etc., 18 times in all), in order to avoid the necessity of ending or beginning a phrase at the 4th foot caesura'.

τεύχεα and, as a result, was also dislocated from its proper position in the 3rd-4th feet. Since, however, as distinct from the above expressions, κλέος ἄφθιτον is never found in the position in question, this is bound to remain pure speculation which, again, cannot be either proved or disproved. Accordingly, the behaviour of the expression within the hexametric poetry as we know it is the only solid evidence we are left with.

Since the publication in 1926 of ‘Der kallimachische und der homerische Hexameter’ by Hermann Fränkel, it is generally recognized that the hexameter line is actually divided not into the metrically identified ‘feet’ but, rather, into the semantically identified ‘cola’ created by metrical breaks, or caesurae, which regularly emerge at certain fixed positions within the verse. The cola, therefore, are both metrical units and units of sense.²⁴ Although *Les formules et la métrique d’Homère* by Milman Parry (1928) was not influenced by Fränkel’s work, it demonstrated beyond doubt that the principal metrical positions of the Homeric formulae correspond to the verse-breaks highlighted by Fränkel.²⁵ Now if we take κλέος ἄφθιτον at *Iliad* 9.413 as part of the sequence κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται, we shall have an expression which precisely corresponds to one of the regular hexametric cola, that running from the fourth-foot (hephthemimeral) caesura to the end of the verse (cf. e.g. such Homeric formulae as πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς or κορυθαιόλος ἔκτωρ).²⁶ The only subdivision that may occur within this sequence is the one created by the so-called bucolic diaeresis, a metrical break between the 4th and the 5th feet. Although there are many fourth-foot cola which are subdivided in this way, they normally do not acquire their full sense until they reach the end of the verse, see, e.g., such formulae as πόδας | ὤκυν Ἀχιλλεύς, Διὸς | υἱὸς Ἀπόλλων, κλυτὰ | τεύχεα δύναι, δόρυ | χάλκεον ἦει, κλέος | ἐσθλὸν ἀρέσθαι, κτλ. It follows, then, that if we take κλέος ἄφθιτον in κλέος | ἄφθιτον ἔσται at *Iliad* 9.413 in isolation from ἔσται, this will give us a highly peculiar case of a supposedly self-contained sense-unit running through the bucolic diaeresis, this ‘the most obvious of all breaks in the Homeric verse’, without however reaching the verse-end.²⁷ As far as I can judge, this is not the way in which Homer’s verse-making normally works, and the fact is that the expression κλέος | ἄφθιτον αἰεῖ, the one in which κλέος ἄφθιτον is for the first time treated as a noun-epithet combination (see

²⁴ The revised version was published in Fränkel (1955) 100–56. For further discussion see Finkelberg, forthcoming.

²⁵ See M.W. Edwards 1997, 266, and 2002, 2–8 and Finkelberg, forthcoming.

²⁶ Cf. Milman Parry’s tables in *MHV* 39.

²⁷ This line of argument was first suggested to me by M.D. Reeve. The quotation is from M.W. Edwards 1966, 167.

above, Section 2), is also cast so as to acquire its full sense only with the reaching of the end of the verse.

The results of the formulaic and the metrical analysis thus concur. While supplying no conclusive evidence as regards its predecessors in extra-hexametric tradition, both speak against the possibility that κλέος ἄφθιτον in hexametric poetry can be interpreted as a traditional formula.

Some Semantic Considerations

In my 1986 article I argued that, since the adjective ἄφθιτος is regularly applied in Homer to precious objects of divine origin, its use to characterize an incorporeal entity such as *kleos* indicates that its meaning was evolving from concrete to abstract; as a result, to place κλέος ἄφθιτον at the beginning of the development would make the adjective undergo a peculiar evolution from the abstract to the concrete, and back again to the abstract.²⁸ The same argument applies to the noun *kleos*. That is, taking κλέος ἄφθιτον as an ancient formula would necessarily involve postulating its evolution from ‘fame’, ‘glory’ to ‘rumour’, ‘report’, and then back to ‘fame’, ‘glory’. I can see no other reason for providing both words with such peculiar histories apart from the wish to place κλέος ἄφθιτον at the beginning of the development.

It can be concluded, therefore, that, although etymologically cognate, the Sanskrit *śrávas* and the Greek *kleos* were not always synonymous with each other. The entry κλέος in *Dictionnaire étymologique* by Pierre Chantraine is worth quoting in this respect:

Κλέος est un vieux nom inanimé qui se retrouve dans skr. *śrávas*- n. ‘gloire’, av. *sravah-* ‘mot’, v. sl. *slovo* n. ‘mot, parole’ (noter les divergences de sens).²⁹

Chantraine’s parenthetical ‘noter les divergences de sens’ is an important caveat, which should be taken into account whenever we confront the etymology of a word with its actual meaning in a given language. The divergences of meaning emphasized by Chantraine, together with the word’s affinity with κλύω, ‘to hear’,

²⁸ See ch. 1, 7 and n. 18. On the discrepancy between the Vedic and the Homeric expression in this specific respect see Floyd 1980. For discussion see Nagy 1990, 244–45 n. 126.

²⁹ Chantraine 1968, s.v. (my emphasis). Chantraine, taking into account the entire history of the word’s development in the Greek language, renders *kleos* as “‘bruit qui court’”, mais le plus souvent “‘reputation, renom, gloire’”. He does not mention the issue of κλέος ἄφθιτον.

indicate that *ea quae fando audiuntur*, chosen by H. Ebeling in his *Lexicon Homericum* for rendering the primary meaning of κλέος in Homer, would still supply a satisfactory common denominator for the entire group, whereas the meaning ‘fame’, ‘glory’ should be taken as a later, albeit natural, development, which occurred independently in both Sanskrit and Greek at different historic periods. The evidence at our disposal strongly suggests that the decisive shift in the meaning of Greek *kleos* from ‘rumour’, ‘report’ to ‘fame’, ‘glory’ occurred not earlier than the end of the seventh century BCE, and that its combination with the epithet ‘imperishable’ should also be placed within the same period.

8 Late Features in the Speeches of the *Iliad*

1

In the Preface to the second edition of his *Studies in the Language of Homer*, G.P. Shipp wrote:

That speeches tend to be later in language and to have more other abnormalities than the narrative has been noted by readers of the first edition and has now been stressed in the analysis of several books. The project would no doubt repay a systematic treatment.¹

In the subsequent discussion Shipp from time to time highlights the special status of the speeches vis-à-vis the narrative. Although far from the systematic treatment of the language of the speeches that he recommends, this is still the fullest treatment available. To adduce some examples, he notes that while '[t]he freedom from exceptional features in the narrative is typical of single combats' that open *Iliad* 6, '[t]he linguistic character changes with the speech of Helenus to Hector' at 6.86ff. (254); that 'Nestor's speeches always make us expect neologisms' (259); that '[a]n important general observation in regard to the duel [of Hector and Ajax in *Iliad* 7] is the difference linguistically between the narrative itself, which has few features to be noticed, and the speeches, which are often marked by many abnormalities' (260); that '[u]nusual features thus cluster especially in these extra-narrative portions' (268); that the great speech of Achilles in *Iliad* 9 'is for the most part characterized by features that reflect contemporary Ionic' (269); that 'the linguistic contrast [of the speech of Menelaus in *Iliad* 13.620 ff.] with the narrative itself is very marked' (282); that '[t]he tendency for late features to occur in speeches rather than in the narrative is especially impressive' in *Iliad* 22 (311), and so on.

Unfortunately, as distinct from Shipp's thorough treatment of the language of the similes, his *ad hoc* remarks relating to the speeches have exerted little influence on the subsequent study of the language of Homer. This is not to say that these remarks came as a surprise. Students of Homer have long been aware of the fact that the language of Homeric speeches differs from that of the narrative in many and various ways.² O. Jørgensen in 1905 and M.P. Nilsson in 1924 pointed out that Homer's characters speak of the gods differently from the poet himself.

¹ Shipp 1972, vii.

² The special status of Homeric speeches was already well recognized in antiquity, see Nünlist 2003.

P. Krarup in 1948 and H. Fränkel in 1951 called attention to the fact that abstract nouns and personifications are much more frequent in the speeches than in the narrative. In an important article published in 1956, T.B.L. Webster showed that clusters of late features, including linguistically late formulae, are especially characteristic of the speeches.³ Numerous neologisms, anachronisms, and other peculiarities of language and vocabulary have been registered for the speeches in many a commentary on the Homeric poems. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, the first to treat the distinction between Homeric speeches and Homeric narrative in a thorough and systematic way was Jasper Griffin. In a ground-breaking article published in 1986, Griffin stated unequivocally that ‘in important senses the Homeric epics have two vocabularies’, one for the narrative and the other for the speeches.⁴ As we shall see, the conclusions that he drew from this observation were quite different from those made by Shipp and others.

In fact, two main approaches to the speeches have crystallized over time. Older scholars tended to account for the speeches’ linguistic and other peculiarities by applying to them the interpretative methods of Analysis. The culmination of this approach was reached in Shipp’s *Studies*, first published in 1953. According to this approach, the fact that innovations in language and vocabulary tend to concentrate in the speeches indicates that their composition is later than that of the main narrative; consequently, the passages in which these innovations are especially numerous should be treated as interpolations. However, although it cannot be denied that rather more often than not interpolations are indeed concentrated in the speeches, and especially in their concluding parts,⁵ this does not mean that all the speeches lend themselves to this kind of treatment. The reason is simple: in so far as the speeches constitute about fifty percent of Homer’s text, this would mean that, if consistently applied, the Analyst approach would culminate in the conclusion that about half of Homer should be regarded as interpolated.

As distinct from this, the neo-unitarian approach that became popular in the second half of the twentieth century tended to regard the speeches’ idiosyncrasies as due to self-conscious stylistic strategies deliberately employed by the poet. Although occasionally applied by other scholars as well,⁶ the first systematic

3 Jörgensen 1904; Nilsson 1924; Krarup 1948; Fränkel 1962, 68; Webster 1956, 44, 46.

4 Griffin 1986, 40.

5 Shipp 1972, 233.

6 See, e.g., Dodds 1951, 11, on the difference between the poet and the characters in the identification of divine interventions: ‘For it is the poet’s characters who talk like this, not the poet: his own convention is quite other—he operates ... with clear-cut anthropomorphic gods such as Athena and Poseidon, not with anonymous daemons. If he has made his characters employ a

treatment of the speeches from this point of view was incontestably Griffin's 'Homeric Words and Speakers', mentioned above. Griffin's starting point that the speeches in Homer have 'important distinctions of vocabulary, and of style, from the rest',⁷ is identical to that of Shipp and other Analysts; but the conclusions that he reaches are diametrically opposite. According to Griffin, rather than being indicative of interpolation, the distinction between speech and narrative, including the distinction in language, is entirely a matter of style:

It therefore seems appropriate to expect that the later stages of the tradition will not simply have been introducing more contemporary linguistic modes into the speeches without reflection, but on the contrary allowing them into the speeches, and excluding them from such narrative as they composed themselves, in accordance with a feeling that they were more appropriate there.⁸

While I agree with Griffin that the argument of style may effectively account for such features of Homeric language as the avoidance of specifying the names of gods involved in a given action or the use of terms of moral evaluation that are absent from the narrative, it is doubtful that the stylistic interpretation he proposed would account equally well for the purely linguistic characteristics of the speeches. It is indeed difficult to envisage a traditional poet deliberately employing, say, quantitative metathesis as a means of stylization. This would become even more evident if we take into account another important aspect of Homeric language, its formulaic idiom.

The role of the formulae as indicators of chronologically different strata of Homeric language was aptly summarized by Brian Hainsworth:

A linguistic development of the vernacular quickly penetrated the fluid and non-formular part of the *Kunstsprache* (where it differed least), or took effect at the junctions between formulae: next the development would appear in modified formulae, 'formulae by analogy', and other derivatives of primary formulae: last of all would the development be found attested among regular formulae.⁹

That deviations from the formulaic language can be used with profit for the identification of later strata of epic diction has been emphasised by other scholars as

different convention, he has presumably done so because that is how people did in fact talk: he is being "realistic".

⁷ Griffin 1986, 50.

⁸ Griffin 1986, 38.

⁹ Hainsworth 1988, 27–28.

well, notably Arie Hoekstra and Richard Janko.¹⁰ On the whole, however, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the fact that the special status of the speeches vis-à-vis the narrative becomes particularly manifest when Homer's formulaic language is taken into account. As far as I can see, one of the reasons why this phenomenon has not drawn as much attention as it deserves is that, in spite of the evidence that has accumulated since Milman Parry's theory of oral composition first became known, many adherents of oral-formulaic theory still proceed from the assumption that one hundred percent of Homer consists of traditional formulae. Accordingly, Homer's language is still regarded by many as essentially a monolithic phenomenon. It is symptomatic in this respect that one of Griffin's purposes in 'Homeric Words and Speakers' was 'to suggest that the language of Homer is a less uniform thing than some oralists tended to suggest'.¹¹

This is not to say that the belief in the one-hundred-percent formulaicity of Homer is shared by all oralists. Thus, by counterposing charts of formulaic density in a routine battle scene on the one hand and in the Lament of Helen over the body of Hector on the other, Hainsworth effectively demonstrated in 1968 that the formulaic density in the latter is 'sharply reduced in comparison with the battle scenes'.¹² In 1976, Joseph Russo studied two Homeric passages, the exchange between Odysseus and Eumaeus in the Argos episode in *Odyssey* 17.303–327 and Hector's rebuke of Polydamas in *Iliad* 18.285–309, and came to the conclusion that their total formulaic content 'falls far below the 90% we have been led to expect'.¹³ That it is first and foremost in direct speech that Homer's nonformulaic expressions are concentrated was further argued by this author in an article published in 1989. To quote its conclusions, 'Thus, the so-called "isolated" expressions differ from the formulaic expressions in several respects: they cannot be shown to have been modelled on formulaic patterns; and they tend to occur in direct speech (rather than the main narrative)...'.¹⁴ On the whole, however, it cannot be denied that the study of the formulaic aspect of Homer's speeches is still a largely neglected field.

As Janko demonstrated in *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns*, the evidence of language is only significant when it comes in clusters: '[w]hen we find a cluster of

¹⁰ Hoekstra 1965; Janko 1982, 15.

¹¹ Griffin 1986, 50. See also above, chs. 4 and 6, and below, ch. 9.

¹² Hainsworth 1968, 112.

¹³ Russo 1976, 45. Cf. also *ibid.* 44, on the *Odyssey* passage, '[b]y the criteria normally used by the orthodox Parry school, this passage would be the creation of a literate poet'.

¹⁴ See above, ch. 4, 39.

results, this implies that the poet concerned is using the traditional diction “naturally”, at more or less the stage at which he found it’.¹⁵ In other words, only when we find peculiar features pertaining to the language, vocabulary and, last but not least, the formulae of Homer assembled in one and the same passage, only then can we say with certainty that the passage in question belongs to a different chronological stratum from the rest of the text. In what follows, I apply this approach to three Iliadic passages: Hector’s reference to the former wealth of Troy in his rebuke of Polydamas in *Iliad* 18.288–96; the opening lines of the speech of Menelaus in *Iliad* 13.620–25; and a story of the persecution of Dionysus by the Thracian king Lycurgus as told by Diomedes in *Iliad* 6.130–37.¹⁶

2

2.1 *Iliad* 18.288–96:

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πριάμοιο πόλιν μέροπες ἄνθρωποι
 πάντες μυθέσκοντο πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον·
 νῦν δὲ δὴ ἐξαπόλωλε δόμων κειμήλια καλά,
 πολλὰ δὲ δὴ Φρυγίην καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινὴν
 κτήματα περνάμεν’ ἵκει, ἐπεὶ μέγας ὠδύσατο Ζεὺς.
 νῦν δ’ ὅτε πέρ μοι ἔδωκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω
 κύδος ἀρέσθ’ ἐπὶ νηυσὶ, θαλάσση τ’ ἔλσαι Ἀχαιούς,
 νήπιε μηκέτι ταῦτα νοήματα φαῖν’ ἐνὶ δῆμῳ·
 οὐ γὰρ τις Τρώων ἐπιτίσεται· οὐ γὰρ ἐάσω.

‘Before now all mortal men would speak of Priam’s city as rich in gold and rich in bronze, and now this great treasure has vanished from our houses, and many of our possessions have been sold and gone to Phrygia or lovely Meïonia, after great Zeus’ anger fell on us. But now when the son of devious-minded Cronus has granted me glory won by the ships, and the Achaeans penned back against the sea, this is no time, fool, to put these thoughts of yours before the people. None of the Trojans will take your advice—I shall not let them’.
 (Transl. M. Hammond)

The passage is famous for its *brevis in longo* in μέροπες ἄνθρωποι at 288. In the above-mentioned formulaic analysis Russo showed that it contains a surprisingly

¹⁵ Janko 1982, 81, 190–91.

¹⁶ Since the characteristically Odyssean language and formulae within the *Iliad* are usually regarded as chronologically marked, this makes the *Iliad* a more convenient target of analysis in terms of relative chronology. What should be regarded as relatively late within the *Odyssey* itself is of course a separate issue.

high number of expressions that occur only one other time in Homer. He wrote in this connection: ‘In other ways, too, the passage presents the analyst with some very “marginal” phrases...’¹⁷ Mark Edwards remarked in respect of μέροτες ἄνθρωποι and πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον: ‘[t]here are two violations—or innovative uses—of normal formulaic conventions in this couplet [18.288–89]’.¹⁸ Shipp commented on the passage’s linguistic lateness and suggested that ‘the two speeches [Polydamas’ and Hector’s] were originally in a simpler form, e.g. merely a suggestion by P. that the Trojans should retire to the city and H.’s reply, unless the deliberations as a whole are late’.¹⁹

Iliad 18.288–96 contains no less than five uncommon or linguistically late formulae:

- (1) μέροτες ἄνθρωποι at 288. Kurt Witte long ago pointed out that this highly irregular expression was prompted by analogy with μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, which occurs nine times in Homer, and Milman Parry later showed that it is a result of the juxtaposition of two Homeric formulae, πόλις (or πόλεις) μερόπων ἀνθρώπων and Πριάμοιο πόλις (or πόλιν).²⁰ Both the irregularity of the expression and its derivative character indicate that it could not belong to the stock of traditional formulae.
- (2) πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον at 289. The expression belongs to what Russo (above) defined as a marginal group of formulae that occur only one other time in Homer. Although both πολύχρυσος and πολύχαλκος are well-attested Homeric epithets, each of them being occasionally employed for the description of a city’s wealth (πολυχρύσοιο Μυκῆνης 3x, Σιδῶνος πολυχάλκου *Od.* 15.425), they are as a rule used separately. The only other occurrence of the combination found here (nominative case) is in the description of Dolon in the linguistically late Doloneia (*Il.* 10.315).
- (3) κειμήλια καλά at 290. The expression belongs to the same group of marginal formulae as πολύχρυσον πολύχαλκον. The only other occurrence, also in direct speech and in a rather similar context (the booty that Odysseus brought with him from Troy), is in the *Odyssey* (10.40). The expression seems to have been created by analogy with the formula κειμήλια κεῖται in order to express the meaning of another established formula, κειμήλια πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά (4x), after the fourth-foot caesura.

¹⁷ Russo 1976, 46.

¹⁸ M.W. Edwards 1991, 180.

¹⁹ Shipp 1972, 298.

²⁰ Witte 1913, 223; *MHV* 197–98; cf. ch. 3, 18.

- (4) Φρυγὴν καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινήν at 291. The only other occurrence (the genitive case), also in direct speech, is at *Iliad* 3.401. Occasional emergence of Phrygia and Meïonia in Homer is a well-established anachronism.²¹ On the whole, Phrygia is mentioned five times and Meïonia twice (the Phrygians and the Meïonians three and four times, respectively), only in the *Iliad*. In view of this, it is especially noteworthy that the epic poets already had at their disposal a formula for the description of the two (but cf. also Λυκίην καὶ Μηονίην ἐρατεινήν in *H.Ap.* 179).
- (5) Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω at 293. Although this expression occurs no less than eight times in Homer, not only is it linguistically late (quantitative metathesis in ἀγκυλομήτεω) and, based as it is on the formulae Κρόνου πάϊς and Κρόνος ἀγκυλομήτης, formally derivative: it is also equivalent to the much more frequently occurring formula, πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε (15x).²² Note also that, though Κρόνος ἀγκυλομήτης as such occurs three times in the Homeric corpus (*Il.* 4.59; *H.Ven.* 22, 42), it is an unmistakably 'Hesiodic' formula (5x in the *Theogony*). All these indicate that Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω is a rare example of a linguistically late formula.²³ To quote Shipp's assessment of the contexts in which it occurs:

Whereas the latter [πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε] is always in narrative our formula is often not, and mostly in contexts that may not be old: B 205 comment on army discipline, B 319 (ath. Ar.) in the portent, Δ 75 simile, M 450 ath., in an explanatory verse, leaving I 37 (Diomedes' speech), Π 431 (between a simile and the dialogue between Zeus and Hera which Zen. omitted), Σ 293 (Hector to Polydamas).²⁴

Contrary to appearances, the fabulous wealth of Troy is far from being a well-established Homeric theme. This can be seen first of all from the city's epithets: as distinct from such cities as Mycenae or Corinth, none of the constant epithets of Troy emphasizes its exceptional wealth.²⁵ The theme recurs only one other time, in *Iliad* 24, again in direct speech (542–46, Achilles to Priam): although Phrygia is mentioned there as well, the wording is different, and the rest of the passage does not resemble *Iliad* 18. This seems to indicate that the wealth of Troy

²¹ See esp. Kullmann 2002, 65, including a discussion of the present passage.

²² For a further discussion see below, ch. 10.

²³ Cf. Chantraine 1958, 70: 'Cet exemple enseigne que la langue épique a admis de formules de type nettement ionien'. On the formulaic lateness of the expression see also Hoekstra 1965, 36 n. 1.

²⁴ Shipp 1972, 171–72.

²⁵ Troy and/or Ilios is usually characterized, rather trivially, as εὐκτίμενος (3x) or εὖ ναίομενος (4x) and, more specifically, as εὐπωλος (5x), εὐρυάγυια (9x), and εὐτείχεος (2x).

is a relatively recent epic theme which has not yet attained a formulaic fixity.²⁶ If correct, this would mean that the passage under discussion should be considered late not only in respect of its language and formulae but also in respect of its thematic content.

2.2 *Iliad* 13.620–25:

λείψετε θην οὕτω γε νέας Δαναῶν ταχυπῶλων
 Τρώες ὑπερφίαλοι δεινῆς ἀκόρητοι αὐτῆς,
 ἄλλης μὲν λώβης τε καὶ αἴσχεος οὐκ ἐπιδευεῖς
 ἦν ἐμὲ λωβήσασθε κακαὶ κύνες, οὐδέ τι θυμῷ
 Ζηνὸς ἐριβρεμέτεω χαλεπὴν ἐδείσατε μῆνιν
 ξεινίου, ὅς τέ ποτ' ὕμμι διαφθήρσει πόλιν αἰπήν.

'That, Trojans, is how you will leave the ships of the fast-horsed Danaans—you violent men, gluttons for the hideous noise of war! No shortage already of your shame and outrage—that outrage done to me, you vile dogs, with no fear in your hearts for the punishing anger of Zeus the thunderer, god of host and guest, who in time will destroy your high city'.

Although ancient scholars apparently did not throw doubt on its authenticity, in modern times Menelaus' speech in *Iliad* 13 has drawn much negative attention. August Fick, Walter Leaf and G.P. Shipp, among others, thought it interpolated, whereas Bernard Fenik went so far as to call it 'Menelaos' unhappy excursus' and 'a particularly unsuccessful example of the "expansion technique"'.²⁷ Janko seems to be the only one to hold that '[m]ost critics misjudge this speech' and that '[i]n fact it weaves several motifs in an integrated whole'.²⁸

Shipp wrote about the passage under discussion: '622–5 have a strong moralizing flavour, and the linguistic contrast with the narrative itself is very marked'.²⁹ And indeed, the opening lines of Menelaus' speech contain no less than four late linguistic features: contraction in ἐπιδευεῖς at 622, monosyllabic quantitative metathesis in ἐριβρεμέτεω at 624, plus two additional recent Ion-

²⁶ It seems significant in this connection that after Homer the theme of Troy's wealth becomes increasingly popular. See, e.g., Aesch. *Ag.* 739–741, Eur. *Tro.* 994–995. Cf. below, n. 44.

²⁷ Fenik 1968, 147.

²⁸ Janko 1992, 123.

²⁹ Shipp 1972, 282. Cf. Webster 1956, 44.

isms—νέας at 620 and Ζηνός at 624. Since these features have often been commented upon, most notably by Shipp and Janko,³⁰ in what follows I will concentrate on the passage's formulaic diction.

Iliad 13.620–25 contains four uncommon or linguistically late formulae:

- (1) νέας Δαναῶν ταχυπώλων at 620. Δαναῶν ταχυπώλων as such is of course a standard Homeric formula, which occurs 10 times in the *Iliad*. However, its combination with νέας, resulting in the emergence of a new expression for 'ships' in the second half of the verse, is unique. Comparison with two equivalent expressions emerging in the *Odyssey*, νέας κυανοπρωγείρους at 3.299 and νέας φοινικοπαρήους at 11.124 and 23.271, both in direct speech,³¹ shows that we have here a series of attempts at making use of the recent Ionism νέας in order to create a formula for 'ships' fitting into the second half of the verse.³² As we shall see immediately, the fact that none of these expressions became a standard Homeric formula is of considerable chronological importance. But first let us discuss another linguistically late formula occurring in this passage.
- (2) Ζηνός ἐριβρεμέτω at 624. I can hardly improve on Janko's characterization of this expression: 'Ζηνός ἐριβρεμέτω is trebly novel: -εω and Ζ. are recent Ionisms, and the phrase is a unique variation on Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης (6x Hom.), duplicating Ζηνός ἐριγδούπου (15.293)'. Janko's comment on the latter is also relevant: 'As we can expect of a recent creation, two equally new equivalent phrases appear elsewhere, Ζ. ἐριβρεμέτω (13.624) and Ζ. ἐρισθενέος (*Erga* 416)'.³³

In his discussion of the presence of quantitative metathesis in Homeric formulae Arie Hoekstra wrote:

It appears, then, that the evidence for the existence of formulae originally built upon quantitative metathesis is extremely slight. This strongly suggests after the metathesis had be-

³⁰ νέας Janko 1992, 124; ἐπιδευεῖς (also *Il.* 9.225) Shipp 1972, 185, 282; Janko 1992, 124, 299; Ζηνός ἐριβρεμέτω below, n. 33.

³¹ The expression νέας φοινικοπαρήους belongs to a passage (Tiresias' prophecy) which is repeated verbatim in *Odyssey* 11 and *Odyssey* 23. Cf. Alexanderson 1970, 26.

³² Cf. Janko 1992, 260 and below; Chantraine 1958, 72, 225–26. On Homeric formulae for ships see also *MHV* 109–13; Hoekstra 1965, 124–30; Alexanderson 1970.

³³ Janko 1992, 124 and 260. On Ζ. ἐριβρεμέτω see also *MHV* 188; Chantraine 1958, 70; Hoekstra 1965, 33; Shipp 1972, 282.

gun to develop in East Ionic, oral composition came to an end so soon that hardly any substantial expression created out of the new material provided by the evolution of the spoken dialect had time to attain a formulaic fixity.³⁴

This would of course be true also of the other late features under discussion, Ζηνός and νέας. As we have seen, the fact that linguistically late equivalents of the expressions νέας Δαναῶν ταχυπώλων and Ζηνὸς ἐριβρεμέτω are attested elsewhere in the epic corpus strongly suggests that, as distinct from Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτω discussed above, the expressions in question had no time to attain a formulaic fixity. Hoekstra's assertion that 'after the metathesis had begun to develop in East Ionic, oral composition came to an end' will be discussed in the concluding part of this paper. At this stage, it is sufficient to emphasise that by all standards both νέας Δαναῶν ταχυπώλων and Ζηνὸς ἐριβρεμέτω of Menelaus' speech should be associated with the latest layer of epic diction.

- (3) πόλιν αἰπὴν rather than αἰεΐαν at 625 is obviously a metrically convenient substitute for αἰπύν. This is the only occurrence in the *Iliad* of this distinctly Odyssean formula (4x). To quote Chantraine's assessment, '[i]t is remarkable that this form is found in the parts that do not seem very ancient'.³⁵
- (4) Finally, the expression Τρῶες ὑπερφίαλοι at 621. As distinct from the formulae discussed above, linguistic commentaries on Menelaus' speech usually pay no attention to this expression. The reason is obvious: on the face of it, Τρῶες ὑπερφίαλοι is an inconspicuous expression, not characterized by late features or other linguistic peculiarities. Yet it is not only unique in this specific position (three modifications occur elsewhere, see below) but it is also metrically equivalent to Τρῶες ὑπέρθυμοι, the well-established Iliadic formula for the Trojans (six times in the same position in the verse, of which three are in the narrative and three in direct speech, plus one direct-speech formulaic modification). And while it is true that ὑπερφίαλοι, 'arrogant', and ὑπέρθυμοι, 'great-spirited', though close in meaning, cannot be considered exact synonyms, this does not alter the fact that what figures here is the introduction of an *ad hoc* variation on the standard formula Τρῶες ὑπέρθυμοι. Significantly, this variation offers an unambiguously negative evaluation of the Trojans, which is absent from the formula Τρῶες ὑπέρθυμοι.³⁶ This is the

³⁴ Hoekstra 1965, 38.

³⁵ Chantraine 1958, 253; my translation. Cf. Shipp 1972, 282; Janko 1992, 124.

³⁶ Cf. Hall 1989, 25: "'Great-spirited" (*hyperthumos*), on the other hand, is relatively frequent (seven occurrences) but is not confined to the Trojan side, and always seems to be approximately synonymous with *megathumos* ... A critic who believes that the Trojans' epithets portray them as significantly more arrogant than the Achaeans therefore betrays his or her own pro-Achaean

reason why Milman Parry, who studied ὑπερφίαλοι as an epithet of the Trojans in his *L'Épithète traditionnelle*, subsumed it under the category of the so-called 'particularized' epithets, emerging 'when the poet wanted to include an adjective for its sense rather than for its [metrical] convenience'.³⁷

The case under discussion seems to fit Griffin's stylistic approach quite well. Τρῶες ὑπερφίαλοι in the mouth of Menelaus clearly lends itself to being interpreted in terms of characterization—or, as many would say today, 'focalization'—of the Trojans from the standpoint of Helen's offended husband.³⁸ It is significant in this connection that the modifications of Τρῶες ὑπερφίαλοι, all of them in *Iliad* 21, belong to direct speech and are put in the mouths of such bitter enemies of Troy as Hera, Athena, and Achilles after the death of Patroclus,³⁹ and that the same would be true of the other cases of unambiguously negative characterization of the Trojans encountered in the *Iliad*.⁴⁰ That the situation in the *Odyssey* is different can be seen from a comparison of the distribution of the adjective ὑπερφίαλοι in both epics.

While in the *Iliad* ὑπερφίαλοι occurs only in direct speech, in the *Odyssey* it is distributed almost evenly between the narrative and the speeches. This obviously reflects the well-known difference in the ethos of the two poems. Namely, although the *Iliad* characters often criticize themselves and each other, its poet consistently avoids judging their behaviour by the standards of 'good' and 'bad'.⁴¹ This withdrawal of moral judgement, which results in the famous impartiality of the *Iliad* (in the apt formulation of Simone Weil, '[i]t is difficult to detect that the poet is Greek and not Trojan'),⁴² is entirely alien to the *Odyssey*. The wrongdoers of the *Odyssey*—Aegisthus, Penelope's suitors, Odysseus' companions—are explicitly identified as such by both the poet and the characters: the

bias, not the poem's'. Among those to whom the epithet *hyperthumos* is applied in the *Iliad* are Diomedes (twice), Heracles, Achilles (twice), and Nestor.

³⁷ *MHV* 155; see *ibid.* 159: 'But ὑπερφίαλος, which has the same metrical value, clearly shows the particularized meaning given by the translation "arrogant"'. Cf. Sale 1989, 378.

³⁸ On focalization in Homer see de Jong 1987 and 1988; Nünlist 2002.

³⁹ *Il.* 21.224 (Achilles), 414 (Athena), 459 (Hera). Cf. *MHV* 159.

⁴⁰ Sale 1989, 344, 377–79. Note, however, that in his speech in *Iliad* 3 Menelaus only says that it is the *sons of Priam* rather than the Trojans as such who are ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄπιστοι (3.106), a characterization which would obviously square much better with the general tenor of the poem.

⁴¹ Cf. Griffin 1986, 39: 'No feature of Homeric style is more important than this. The narrator depicts events in a way which leaves the understanding of their moral significance to the audience—an audience whose presence is never acknowledged'.

⁴² Weil 2003, 66.

Odyssean formula μνηστῆρσιν ὑπερφιάλοισι, appearing after the second-foot caesura no less than nine times, five of them in the narrative, readily comes to mind in this connection.⁴³ In view of this, it seems reasonable to suppose that, rather than purely a matter of style, Menelaus' Τρῶες ὑπερφιάλοι reflects the erosion of the impartial attitude to the Trojans characteristic of the earlier tradition.⁴⁴ The term ὕβρισταί, applied to the Trojans later in Menelaus' speech (633–34), obviously expresses the same tendency.

Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that the context in which the expression Τρῶες ὑπερφιάλοι emerges is both linguistically and formulaically late. With this in mind, let us turn to the cult title of Zeus as Xenios, attested here for the first time. It is significant in this connection that both Pierre Chantraine and Hugh Lloyd-Jones based their interpretations of justice in the *Iliad* on this specific passage.⁴⁵ Both interpretations were polemically directed against Dodds' assertion in *The Greeks and the Irrational* that he finds 'no indication in the narrative of the *Iliad* that Zeus is concerned with justice as such'.⁴⁶ Either assessment is based on solid evidence: on the one hand, Chantraine and Lloyd-Jones are correct in that Menelaus does appeal to the authority of Zeus Xenios; on the other, Dodds is also correct in claiming that the narrative of the *Iliad* never credits Zeus with this title.⁴⁷ What seems especially important, however, is that, like Τρῶες ὑπερφιάλοι discussed above, Zeus' title as Xenios emerges in a context that abounds in late linguistic and formulaic features.

⁴³ On the generic meaning of this formula see Sale 1989, 378. On the different ethical attitudes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* see also below, chs. 20 and 21.

⁴⁴ According to Sale 1989, 377–79, the negative epithets for the Trojans reflect the inherited 'Achaean' attitude: this attitude was changed by Homer who, being sympathetic to the Trojans, only allowed the negative epithets in the mouths of the characters. Yet, the distribution of the formulae Τρῶες ὑπέρθυμοι and Τρῶες ὑπερφιάλοι as described above suggests a different chronological picture. See also Hall 1989, 21–40, on the increasing 'barbarization' of the Trojans in post-Homeric poetry.

⁴⁵ Chantraine 1952, 74–75; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 7. Cf. Janko 1992, 122–23.

⁴⁶ Dodds 1951, 32; cf. Chantraine 1952, 75–76; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 1. Another Iliadic passage in which Zeus' responsibility for *xenoi* is implied (Janko 1992, 124) is also part of a speech, see *Il.* 3.351ff. Cf. also *Od.* 14.386–89.

⁴⁷ Cf. Rutherford 1992, 75 n. 107: 'The idea that the gods constantly watch for and punish mortal wrongdoers is undoubtedly current—it figures in speeches in the *Iliad*, as well as in the *Odyssey* and in Hesiod—but the main narrative of the *Iliad* presents the gods as capricious and little concerned with justice'.

2.3 *Iliad* 6.130–37:

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ Δρύαντος υἱὸς κρατερὸς Λυκόοργος
 δὴν ἦν, ὅς ῥα θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοισιν ἔριζεν·
 ὅς ποτε μαινομένοιο Διωνύσοιο τιθήνας
 σεῦε κατ' ἡγάθεον Νυσήϊον· αἱ δ' ἅμα πᾶσαι
 θύσθλα χαμαὶ κατέχευαν ὑπ' ἀνδροφόνοιο Λυκούργου
 θεινόμεναι βουπλῆγι· Διώνυσος δὲ φοβηθεὶς
 δύσεθ' ἄλὸς κατὰ κύμα, Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ
 δειδιότα· κρατερὸς γὰρ ἔχε τρόμος ἀνδρὸς ὁμοκλῆ.

'Even the son of Dryas, strong Lycurgus, even he lived no long life, for clashing with the heavenly gods. He once chased the nurses of wild Dionysus down from the sacred mountain Nysa. They all scattered their holy wands on the ground, under the blows of murdering Lycurgus' ox-goad: and Dionysus in terror dived into the sea's swell, and Thetis took him to her breast, fearful and trembling hard at the man's threat'.

This is one of the few occasions on which Dionysus makes his appearance in the Homeric poems. To quote G.S. Kirk's comment on the passage under discussion, '[R]eferences to Dionusos are rare in Homer—in *Il.* only otherwise at 14.325 (incidentally to his mother Semele whom Zeus had loved), and in *Od.* in relation to Ariadne and Thetis at 11.325 and 24.74—and only in contexts which are allusive and incidental. His membership of the Olympian pantheon is marginal at this stage...'⁴⁸ In addition, the passage contains two hapax legomena, θύσθλα at 134 and βουπλῆγι at 135, as well as a rare use of ὑπό and contraction Λυκούργου at 134.⁴⁹ Finally, the layer of formulaic expressions in it is remarkably thin.

Iliad 6.130–37 contains five expressions that are based on formulaic associations:

- (1) θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοισιν at 131. Although the expression is found twice in Homer, both occurrences belong to the same passage (*Il.* 6.129 and 131), which makes it unlikely that this is a well-established formula. At the same time, the related expressions ἐ. θεοῖς, also in *Iliad* 6 (527), and τις ἐπουράνιος θεός ἐστι (*Od.* 17.484) allow us to suggest that θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοισιν is either an underrepresented formula or one in *statu nascendi*.
- (2) χαμαὶ κατέχευαν at 134: a unique expression, probably created by association with χύντο χαμαὶ χολάδες (2 x *Il.*).
- (3) ἀνδροφόνοιο Λυκούργου at 134. This is the only time in the epics that the word order attested in the widespread formula Ἐκτορὸς ἀνδροφόνοιο (11x *Il.*;

⁴⁸ Kirk 1990, 173.

⁴⁹ On the two latter see Shipp 1972, 255, cf. *ibid.* 24.

cf. also Ἄρεος ἄ. *Il.* 4.441) is reversed. Emendations have been proposed to avoid contraction in Λυκούργου.⁵⁰

- (4) δύσεθ' ἄλως κατὰ κῦμα at 136. The expression can be compared with ὑπὸ κῦμα θαλάσσης αὐτίκ' ἔδυσαν at *Iliad*.18.145 (of the Nereids). Cf. also ὑπὸ (or ἐς) πόντον ἐδύσετο (3x *Od.*)
- (5) Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ at 136. The hemistich is repeated in full in *Iliad* 18.398, Thetis receiving Hephaestus thrown down from Olympus by Hera. Since the Hephaestus story is obviously more popular with Homer (cf. *Il.* 1.592–95), it can be suggested that what is being dealt with is an *ad hoc* adaptation of this epic theme.

It is true of course that ἔχε τρόμος at 137, which occurs two additional times in the *Iliad*, can with right be considered a formula and that the noun-epithet combination κρατερός Λυκόοργος at 130 is built on a well-established formulaic pattern (cf. κ. Διομήδης 19x *Il.*). On the whole, however, it cannot be denied that, as far as Homer's formulaic diction is concerned, *Iliad* 6.130–37 is almost devoid of formulae. When taken against this background, the efforts to eliminate contraction in Λυκούργου at 134 should be recognized as misguided:⁵¹ the linguistic, the formulaic, and the thematic evidence concur to create a consistent picture of the lateness of this passage.

To be sure, insofar as one's methodological position demands treating any passage containing linguistic and other deviations as issuing from interpolation, there is good reason to discard the passages discussed in this section as late additions. It seems, however, that, although the concentration of late and deviating features in *Iliad* 18.288–96, 13.620–25 and 6.130–37 is perhaps somewhat above the average, they highlight what we find in other Homeric speeches as well. It follows, then, that, to the degree that the passages discussed are representative of Homeric speeches as a whole, the consistent application of the approach in question would, as observed above, lead to assessing some fifty percent of the text of Homer as resulting from interpolation. Needless to say, this can hardly be regarded as a realistic solution. On the other hand, as I hope to have shown, the linguistic and formulaic lateness of the speeches cannot be ignored or explained away as a purely stylistic phenomenon. Accordingly, my next task is to suggest an alternative way in which the status of the speeches may be approached.

⁵⁰ See M. West 1998 *ad loc.*; Shipp 1972, 255 and 24 n. 4.

⁵¹ As well as other similar attempts, see the caveat expressed in Wachter 2012, 76.

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It is generally recognized today that before they were fixed in writing Greek epics about the Trojan War had circulated for centuries in oral tradition. It is also generally recognized that this tradition was permanently in a state of flux. Not only is the language of Homer is a *Kunstsprache* consisting of different historical layers of Greek language, but it has also been shown, above all in the studies of Hoekstra and Hainsworth, that Homer's formulaic idiom too is characterized by a high degree of flexibility and adaptation, and therefore should also be approached diachronically. The same amalgam of different historic periods can also be found in Homer's depictions of material culture, social institutions, moral values, and religious beliefs. Like *Λυκοόπυος* and *Λυκοῦπυου* within one and the same passage, the old and the new exist side by side in Homer, for the simple reason that each successive generation of poets retold anew what had been bequeathed to them by their tradition. Since the traditional stories about the Trojan War were not only universally known but also accepted as historical truth, the poets were not allowed to mould them in a free and independent manner: what they were allowed to do was to enrich and develop them leaving the essentials of their plots intact.⁵² This is why dissonances between the plot of the poems and what is expressed in the speeches are so important: while the plot is fixed in tradition, the content of the speeches is not; accordingly, the speeches are fit to express not only the opinions of the characters but also the poets' attitude to what they received from their tradition.

As I have argued elsewhere, the double perspective thus adopted would often result in one and the same episode being simultaneously delivered from two points of view, the traditional and the poet's own. It comes as no surprise that the latter would as a rule express the attitudes of the poet's own time.⁵³ Owing to Homer's extensive use of direct speech, it was possible to incorporate these attitudes into the text of the poems without changing their plots. And although this would of course be true not only of the speeches,⁵⁴ by their very nature the speeches would present the most appropriate vehicle for furnishing the traditional diction with elements of the world to which the poet and his audience belonged.

⁵² On the issue of the traditional poet's creative freedom see below, ch. 12.

⁵³ See below, ch. 22, 264–67.

⁵⁴ The poet's famous comment on the inequality of exchange in the Glaucus-Diomedes episode in *Iliad* 6 provides an excellent example. Cf. Seaford 1994, 15.

Not incidentally, therefore, are Homer's nonformulaic and metrically irregular expressions, linguistically late features, and the like, concentrated in direct speech. This does not mean that the contexts in which non-standard expressions and ideas occur were much less prominent in epic poetry before Homer. Though everything suggests that expressions of this kind belong to the latest layer of the Homeric epics, this does not entail that epic diction before Homer contained no speeches or consisted mostly of standard scenes cast in traditional formulae. Hoekstra's observation to the effect that formulaic introductions to Homer's speeches indicate that 'even at very early stages dialogue existed alongside narrative' spares me many words here.⁵⁵ Yet it is reasonable to suppose that while the formulae were preserved in the stock of traditional expressions, the nonformulaic and irregular expressions were ephemeral creations that varied from one poet to another. In other words, even if epic poets before Homer also composed long speeches abounding in non-traditional expressions which reflected the attitude of their own times, these were not likely to survive. Janko's formulation, although it does not address the speeches as such, is appropriate here:

In a tradition that consists of oral improvisation rather than accurate memorisation, it is inevitable that, in those fields where the tradition hands down no ready-made diction, the improviser will draw on the only other diction he knows, that of his vernacular.⁵⁶

But how late can these late features of the Homeric epics be? In Hoekstra's words quoted above, the expressions that did not attain a formulaic fixity—and it should be kept in mind that this includes the overwhelming majority of linguistically late expressions in Homer—should be seen as simultaneous with the end of oral composition. Hoekstra appears to imply that at the moment when the Homeric poems were composed the epic language became frozen and the oral tradition came to an end. But surely, as neo-Ionisms and similar phenomena strongly suggest, oral tradition as such did not die out with the fixation of the Homeric poems in writing.⁵⁷ This is why I see the now classical formulation by Adam Parry to the effect that 'the name "Homer" ... must be reserved for the poet who composed the *Iliad*

⁵⁵ Hoekstra 1965, 52, n. 1; cf. ch. 4, n. 35. On Homeric speech introductions see M.W. Edwards 1968.

⁵⁶ Janko 1982, 16, cf. 192.

⁵⁷ Cf. Foley 1990, 21: '[t]here is no reason to believe that, even if the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that have reached us were fixed in the sixth century B.C., oral composition of the Homeric ilk immediately ceased'. On neo-Ionisms see M. West 2001, 32, 34, 43–44.

at the time when it was put into writing' as providing a more satisfactory explanation for the phenomena discussed.⁵⁸

That is to say, if the epic language indeed ceased to develop, this happened only in respect of those individual products of oral tradition that were fixed in writing. At that time, epic diction already presented an amalgam, or rather something on a par with an archaeological site whose upper stratum represents the last stage of the site's continuous occupation. And since, as I hope to have shown, Homeric speeches by definition belong to this upper stratum, they were also most prone to preserve the realia, the language, the institutions and the mores as they existed at the moment when the poems were fixed in writing. As far as I can see, this would account satisfactorily enough for the peculiarities of the speeches as discussed in this paper. Indeed, it seems not to be a mere coincidence that the linguistic and formulaic irregularities observed above occur in those parts of the Homeric text which are innovatory in content: Dionysus and Zeus Xenios, as well as the fabulous wealth of Troy and the unambiguously negative evaluation of the Trojans readily come to mind in this connection. If this is correct, then linguistic and formulaic irregularities emerging in the speeches should be regarded as by-products of the last poet's intervention in the traditional idiom.

To recapitulate, although the speeches undeniably form an inseparable part of Homeric diction, they belong to its latest stratum, the one that coincided with the fixation of the Homeric poems in writing. It follows, then, that it would be dangerous to base a comprehensive theory regarding Homer on the material of the speeches alone. To return to the passages discussed above, Diomedes' use of the Dionysus myth or Menelaus' appeal to Zeus Xenios cannot be seen as adequately representing Homer's religious beliefs in their entirety, but, rather, as representing such beliefs that, like monosyllabic quantitative metathesis, only became available at the latest stage in the poems' history. In view of this, it would be a welcome desideratum if Homeric dictionaries began to specify the types of context in which a given word or expression normally appears in Homer, for Homeric words and expressions found in the narrative are not necessarily identical to those found in the speeches, and vice versa.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ A. Parry 1966, 201. See also below, ch. 31.

⁵⁹ To my knowledge, the only database that allows this kind of search is *The Chicago Homer* www.library.northwestern.edu/homer by A. Kahane and M. Mueller.

9 Oral-Formulaic Theory and the Individual Poet

The hypothesis of oral-formulaic composition not only has changed beyond recognition the perception of Homer and other traditional poetries all over the world. It has highlighted the traditional background of many works of early literature and enhanced our understanding of the ways in which pre-literary societies accumulated and transmitted knowledge. It stimulated, directly or indirectly, the insights of Eric Havelock, Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, Jack Goody, and others whose work has deeply influenced the way in which the cultural role of technologies of communication is perceived in the contemporary world. All this being taken into account, it would be no exaggeration to say that the Parry-Lord hypothesis is one of the major contributions of Classics to contemporary discourse.

At some point, however, something went wrong. In recent decades, the number of scholarly publications on matters of formulaic analysis has sharply decreased, and the enthusiasm with which the essentials of oral-formulaic theory were discussed in the 1960s has given way to expressed fatigue and a defensive, if not apologetic, attitude. ‘Homeric oral poetry is in crisis’, stated one author as early as 1987, whereas in 2002 another issued the following verdict: ‘Formulaic analysis reached a dead end thirty years ago’.¹ As far as I can see, the main if not the only factor responsible for this unwelcome development has been the uncritical acceptance of every single tenet of Parry’s original hypothesis by the mainstream Parryism. It was this uncritical acceptance that has led to the emergence of a tacit assumption that, in so far as the oral background of the Homeric poems can be seen as firmly established, nothing remains to be explained about the mode of their functioning. It is doubtful, however, whether unqualified application to Homer of the hypothesis of oral-formulaic composition is as justifiable as many are ready to admit. This concerns first and foremost Parry’s view of the relationship between traditional diction and the individual poet.

¹ Shive 1987, i; Powell 2002, 7; cf. ch. 6.

The Formulaic and the Nonformulaic

Parry maintained that a clear-cut distinction should be drawn between the traditional poet on the one hand and ‘a poet of an individual style’ on the other: while the former, being a vehicle of the tradition, only slightly modified the stock of the formulae he had inherited from his predecessors, the latter aspired at creating an original style of his own.² Yet, as the study of Homer’s formulaic diction proceeded from the proper to the common names, it became increasingly manifest that not all of Homer’s expressions may count as formulaic and traditional. As a result, the adherents of oral-formulaic theory became divided into ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ Parryists.

The ‘hard’ Parryists, beginning with Parry’s disciples A.B. Lord and J.A. Notopoulos, insisted on maintaining at all cost the idea of 100% formulaicity of Homer. This approach to Homer’s formulaic diction gradually led to considerable loosening of the criteria for identifying the basic unit of Homeric composition—so much so that not only single words regularly placed in the same metrical positions but also recurring syntactic and phonic patterns not identical in their wordings began to be identified as formulae. But it was above all the concept of ‘underrepresented formula’, applied indiscriminately to every expression for which no proof of formulaicity could be produced, that has become a *deus ex machina* of oral theory. Soon enough, however, the tendency to stretch the definition of the formula so that it may equally apply to all Homeric expressions began to be felt unsatisfactory by many. This led to various efforts to replace the formula as identified by Parry with other, more flexible, units of composition, and eventually to the erosion of the very idea of the formula.³

On the other hand, such ‘soft’ Parryists as Arie Hoekstra and J.B. Hainsworth, while still maintaining the predominantly formulaic character of Homer, argued for a much higher flexibility of Homeric diction than had originally been allowed for by Parry.⁴ The revisionist atmosphere that became dominant following the

² Parry regarded the emergence of such an individual style in traditional poetry as a symptom of degeneration: see especially *MHV* 237–38; cf. ch. 5, 51–52.

³ As I argued elsewhere, any revision of Parry’s original definition of the formula would be fatal to the hypothesis of formulaic composition. Namely, if we modify the definition of the formula by introducing additional criteria for its identification (as was done, for example, in Michael Nagler’s ‘generative approach’ which was influential in the 1970s and 1980s), all the essentials of Parry’s original hypothesis would collapse and the formulaic theory would cease to work as a valid analytical tool. See further ch. 6, 55–57.

⁴ See especially Hoekstra 1965 and Hainsworth 1968.

publication of their work made most Homerists overlook a far-reaching implication that their conclusions had for the thesis of the 100% formulaicity of Homer. This primarily concerns the well-known phenomenon of gaps in the formulaic systems.

A formulaic system, or a system of formulae, is a group of expressions of varying metrical shape, specialized for rendering a given idea under various metrical conditions. As Parry has demonstrated, the systems into which Homeric formulae are organized are characterized by extension and economy. Thus, for example, the idea 'Athena' is covered by the following series of formulae running from the beginning of the verse up to the bucolic diaeresis:

Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ (8x)
 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (51x)
 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (26x)
 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη (39x).

We can see that the formulaic system at the poet's disposal allows him to express the idea 'Athena' practically in any part of the verse (the system's extension), at the same time keeping only one formula for each metrical position (the system's economy). As a result of comparison between Homer on the one hand and Apollonius Rhodius and Virgil on the other, Parry showed that, although these later hexameter poets could also employ fixed expressions, the phenomenon of formulaic systems with the economy and extension involved was altogether alien to them; the same results were later obtained by M. Sale for the *Posthomeric* of Quintus of Smyrna.⁵ That is to say, in that the formulaic systems make it possible for the poet to express any essential idea in any part of the verse, there is every reason to see them as the central core of formulaic composition.

At the same time, as Hainsworth and Hoekstra have made clear, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that gaps in the formulaic systems are too numerous to be ascribed to the chances of representation. To put it bluntly, there is insufficient evidence for asserting the thoroughly formulaic character of Homeric diction. Similar conclusions have also been reached by other scholars. As a result, today we can claim with a considerable degree of certainty that at least one-third of our text of Homer consists of expressions that cannot be considered formulaic.⁶ Furthermore, studies of the contexts in which both the formulaic and the nonformulaic expressions appear have shown that there is a clear-cut functional specialization between these two categories of Homeric expressions. As distinct from the

⁵ Sale 1996. On the importance of formula systems in Homer see also Lord 1991, 74.

⁶ See esp. Cantilena 1982; Sale 1989; Finkelberg 1989 (= ch. 4 above).

formulae and formulaic expressions, the nonformulaic expressions not only cannot be shown to be modelled on formulaic patterns but are also regularly employed in untypical narrative situations. This allows us to suggest that the formulaic and the nonformulaic elements in Homeric diction were mutually complementary. This can be accounted for by the application of the same principle of economy on which Parry based his theory of formulaic composition. That is to say, just as it makes sense in terms of formulaic economy to have formulae and formulaic systems for any frequently recurring idea and standard narrative situation, so it equally makes sense not to overload the poet's memory in the case of ideas and situations that do not fall into this category and to use individual expressions instead.⁷

This seems to indicate that even in traditional poetry a considerable allowance should be made for the poet's individual contribution. The comparative evidence at hand strongly suggests that the recognition of the fact that nonformulaic expressions are germane to Homeric diction is not incompatible with the hypothesis that the Homeric poems were orally composed. Thus, according to M. Sale, only about 65% of the *Wedding of Smailagić Meho* by the great Southslavic gouslar Avdo Mededović can be considered formulaic, while J.D. Smith supplies similar figures for the Indian epic of Pabuji.⁸ Indeed, though it is reasonable to suppose that nonformulaic expressions belong to the late layers of the Homeric epics, this does not mean that epic diction before Homer consisted mostly of traditional formulae. If nonformulaic expressions were indeed created in order to fill the gaps left by the systems of formulae, this would mean that, unlike the formulae, which were preserved in the stock of traditional expressions, the nonformulaic expressions were ephemeral creations that varied from one poet to another.

Accordingly, there is reason to assume that (a) there was a systemic tension between the epic tradition and the individual poet and (b) rather than a symptom of degeneration, this tension should be regarded as an inbuilt element of formulaic composition.⁹ If correct, this assumption would allow for a less rigid construal of Homer's individual artistry and, consequently, for a far-reaching modification of Parry's model of a wholly traditional poet who puts his verses together almost automatically. I will further illustrate my point by discussing a series of examples that highlight the occasions on which the theory ceases to work, so to

⁷ See above, ch. 4, 42–43. *Contra* Friedrich 2007, 22.

⁸ Sale 1989; Smith 1991, 26. See also above, ch. 6, 63–64.

⁹ Cf. Russo 1968, 294, on 'the tension that exists between *tradition* and *invention*' in the Homeric poems (Russo's emphasis); Russo, however, sees this tension as characteristic of Homer rather than of traditional poetry in general.

say. All the cases discussed concern the pivotal issue of breaches in formulaic economy.

The Traditional and the Individual

Breaches in economy caused by the existence of two equivalent formulae—as, for example, βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη and θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη—are not very common in Homer. They are usually taken as indicative of the fact that traditional poetry does not keep the same formula forever: owing to social changes and changes in literary taste, to the fact that a given expression may become obsolete or alter its original meaning, new formulae were constantly entering into circulation, with some of them eventually replacing the older ones.¹⁰ Now while a breach in economy caused by the existence of two equivalent formulae is indicative of processes operative within epic diction as a whole, the cases when such a breach is observed between a formula and an individual expression may well tell us something about processes underlying the relationship between the individual poet and his tradition. As we shall see, this relationship is much less unambiguous than was initially assumed.

In ‘Homeric Formulae and Homeric Metre’ Parry argued that certain metrical irregularities occur because the poet would always rather use a traditional expression, even if this would entail a metrical fault, than abandon the tradition, using an individual expression instead.¹¹ If, however, we examine the metrically irregular expressions studied by Parry, we will find that these suppositions cannot account for all of them, for there are many cases in which the poet could have avoided the metrical fault simply by using a different traditional expression. Let me adduce just two examples.¹²

As Parry argued, the hiatus at *Iliad* 4.91 λαῶν, οἳ οἱ ἔποντο ἀπ’ Αἰσίοιο ῥοάων, describing Pandarus’ men, was caused by adaptation of the formula ἀπ’ Ὀκεανοῖο ῥοάων.¹³ But this formula also occurs in the form παρ’ Ὀκεανοῖο ῥοάων, which apparently was intended for being used in metrical environments like the one in question.¹⁴ If the poet had turned to this pattern, the line *λαῶν, οἳ οἱ

¹⁰ On equivalent formulae see also above, ch. 7, and below, ch. 10. On the two equivalent formulae for Hera see also Friedrich 2007, 78–80 (with bibliography).

¹¹ *MHV* 196, 237.

¹² For the full list see ch. 3 above.

¹³ *MHV* 208.

¹⁴ Cf. *Il.* 19.1 Ἡὼς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἀπ’ Ὀκεανοῖο ῥοάων with *Od.* 22.197 οὐδὲ σέ γ’ ἡριγένεια παρ’ Ὀκεανοῖο ῥοάων. Parry (*ibid.*) does mention this variant but makes nothing of it.

ἔποντο παρ' Αἰσίοιο ῥοάων would have been both traditional and metrically correct.

Discussing two similar cases of hiatus, *Odyssey* 3.64 ὥς δ' αὐτως ἡρᾶτο Ὀδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός and *Odyssey* 16.48 ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἔπειτα Ὀδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός, Parry wrote: 'there were no formulae other than the ones we quoted to express, in the same portion of the line, the ideas "in the same way Telemachus prayed" and "Telemachus sat there"'.¹⁵ Such a formula does, however, exist: ἱερὴ ἱς Τηλεμάχοιο, by introduction of which after the masculine caesura the same metrical difficulty is often resolved in the *Odyssey*.¹⁶ Thus the poet could have avoided hiatus in these cases as well by saying *ὥς δ' αὐτως ἡρᾶθ' ἱερὴ ἱς Τηλεμάχοιο and *ἔνθα καθέζετ' ἔπειθ' ἱερὴ ἱς Τηλεμάχοιο.

As for the question why the poet did not choose metrically regular alternatives in the cases discussed, the answer that most naturally suggests itself in the majority of cases is that he simply did not think of the appropriate expression while assembling his verses. In other words, the metrical irregularities discussed above must be due to the poet's failure to use the system of formulaic diction in a faultless way. The fact that, as distinct from a scholar using a concordance, he did not exploit the range of opportunities offered by the system of traditional diction testifies to the fact that the individual poet, traditional though he is, cannot be regarded as in every respect identical to the system of traditional diction.

When Homer avoids using such expressions as παρ' Αἰσίοιο ῥοάων, it is actually certain that the appropriate expression simply did not come to his mind at the moment of the composition. But it may be a different matter when in describing Telemachus at *Odyssey* 3.64 and 16.48 he uses Ὀδυσσεύς φίλος υἱός instead of the slightly different ἱερὴ ἱς Τηλεμάχοιο, especially cast for avoiding hiatus on such occasions. It may indeed be suggested that the expression which was actually used by him, while involving a metrical fault, was felt as fitting better the poet's need to represent Telemachus as Odysseus' son and to introduce affective overtones absent in the much too impersonal ἱερὴ ἱς Τηλεμάχοιο. It is possible, then, that the poet deliberately avoided employing the formula suggested to him by his tradition in order to produce exactly that effect.¹⁷ I hope that the following examples will bring my point home.

¹⁵ MHV 203.

¹⁶ Most commonly in the expression τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε ἱερὴ ἱς Τηλεμάχοιο: see *Od.* 2.409, 18.405, 21.101; cf. also *Od.* 18.60, 21.130.

¹⁷ Cf. Friedrich 2007, 93–128, who marshals an impressive array of case-studies involving a breach of formular economy, all of them intended to demonstrate Homer's deliberate use of phrase *juste*.

Let us consider first Plato's misquoting in *Apology* 28d of ἀλλ' ἡμαί παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης ('but I sit here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth'), Achilles' words at *Iliad* 18.104. On the one hand, Plato's version, παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν ἄχθος ἀρούρης ('by the beaked ships, a burden on the earth'), replacing the nonformulaic ἐτώσιον with the formulaic κορωνίσιν, introduces a variant which, from the point of view of the system of formulaic composition, is more 'correct' than the verse we find in our text of Homer. On the other hand, Plato's version, impeccable though it is from the standpoint of the system, banalizes the unique expression ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης, which is both poetically powerful and highly appropriate within the context of *Iliad* 18.¹⁸ In other words, Plato's slip of memory, just as our concordance-based corrections of Homeric verses, acts as an attempt at normalization of Homer's individual idiom by bringing it into correspondence with the system of traditional diction. It is obvious, however, that as far at least as *Iliad* 18.104 is concerned, such normalization would be sharply at variance with the poet's intention. In other words, the poet of the *Iliad* is revealed here as, to use Parry's negative characterization again, 'a poet of an individual style', that is, one who prefers a unique but poetically appropriate expression to a well-established traditional formula.

During Telemachus' visit to the palace of Menelaus in *Odyssey* 4, Helen proposes to entertain the company by recounting 'plausible things' (*eoikota*) about Odysseus. Her subsequent story about meeting Odysseus when he entered Troy disguised as a beggar evokes an episode related in the *Little Iliad*. Characteristically, Helen's words present a unique variation of the traditional formula 'I shall recount the truth' (ἀληθεῖην καταλέξω).¹⁹ Note indeed that Helen's 'I shall recount plausible things' is metrically equivalent to this formula and is therefore redundant from the point of view of formulaic economy. In Homer, the verb *katalegein*, 'to recount', regularly evokes the point-by-point narrative succession demanded of a truthful account; accordingly, its combination with the word *eoikota*, 'plausible things', creates a sharp semantic incongruity: what the poet actually says is that what is being told is a plausible story (*eoikota*) cast in the form of a truthful account (*katalegein*). In that, it comes close to the phrase 'he uttered many lies which resembled truth', applied by Homer to a lying story told by Odysseus to Penelope, as well as to the utterance of Hesiod's Muses, who also know how to tell not only truth but also plausible lies.²⁰ That is to say, although

¹⁸ On the role of this episode in the overall design of the *Iliad* see ch. 22, 262–64.

¹⁹ *Od.* 4.239 εἰκότα γὰρ καταλέξω; cf. ἀληθεῖην κατάλεξον, -ξα, -ξω *Il.* 24.407, *Od.* 7.297, 16.226, 17.108, 122, 21.212, 22.420 and above, ch. 2.

²⁰ *Od.* 19.203; *Hes. Th.* 27.

what Helen tells is an episode from the Trojan saga, the latter is understood as not differing in essence from the mixture of fact and fiction contained in Odysseus' inventions. This allows us to conclude that the replacement of a traditional formula by a unique expression as attested in *Odyssey* 4 was caused by the poet's wish to express an idea not provided for by his tradition.²¹

It is probable, then, that quite a few breaches in formulaic economy were due to the poet's intention to express something for which his tradition has provided no ready-made solution. This testifies to the fact that the individual poet cannot be regarded as in every respect identical to the system of formulaic diction: rather than acting as a passive medium of his tradition he employs this tradition *ad hoc* in his own idiosyncratic manner.²²

Conclusions

There can be little room for doubt that Milman Parry discovered and described the system that underlies the working of Greek traditional diction. Yet, he proceeded from the assumption that the same rules apply both to the impersonal epic tradition and to its personal medium, the individual poet. Not infrequently, however, his conclusions seem to have the latter out of the account. It seems indeed that the main methodological problem of Parry's theory of oral-formulaic composition is that it fails to draw a distinction between the system of formulaic diction and the concrete manifestations of this system in the work of individual poets. However no system, oral-formulaic or other, can be treated as identical to the individual text that derives from it: the distinction between 'langue' and 'parole' would certainly be in place here. In other words, the applicability of the oral-formulaic hypothesis to Homeric diction cannot be regarded as absolute.

²¹ Cf. Finkelberg 1998, 148–50. According to Scodel 2002, 65 n. 1, the *eoikota* at *Od.* 4.239 means 'appropriate' rather than 'plausible'; this, however, does not alter the fact that the word is emphatically put in contrast to 'truth', which would normally be expected in such cases.

²² In a recent monograph, Rainer Friedrich identifies a similar kind of tension between Homer and his tradition. Yet, he interprets it diachronically, that is, as a gradual progression from 100% formulaicity as characteristic of oral poetry proper to a less than 100% formulaicity characteristic of transitional texts, i.e. such texts that are situated midway between orality and writing; he places Homer in the latter category: see Friedrich 2007, 140–46. However, comparative evidence testifies unequivocally that 100% formulaicity cannot be taken as an indicator of orality (see above, with n. 8); it is more likely, therefore, that the tension between the individual poet and the system of formulaic diction as described in this paper should be taken synchronically rather than diachronically.

Should this conclusion be considered fatal to the theory as we have it? According to the prevailing assumption, insofar as the Parry-Lord hypothesis does not work as a total system it inevitably loses its explicative value and should therefore be abandoned. This is, however, to overlook the fact that the explicative value of the hypothesis of formulaic composition has proved its worth in the work of many scholars whose main pursuit was not so much the formulaic theory as such but, rather, the study of a given traditional Greek text cast in hexameters. To claim that the formulaic theory does not work insofar as it cannot be indiscriminately applied to the totality of the text of Homer is to ignore that its application in the course of the last eighty years has changed Homeric scholarship almost beyond recognition. This being the case, it would be an unforgivable mistake to abandon the approach that contributed so much to our understanding of Homeric diction. Yet, to sustain the Parry-Lord theory as a valid scientific hypothesis, we have to recognize its limitations and to work out a more comprehensive theory that would account not only for the system of formulaic diction but also for its concrete manifestations in the work of individual poets.²³

23 Earlier versions of this paper were read in spring 2007 at Columbia University and at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; I am grateful to the audiences present on both occasions for their helpful comments. My special thanks go to Albio Cesare Cassio and Susanne Saïd for their spirited discussion of the contents of this paper at the Thessaloniki conference.

10 Equivalent Formulae for Zeus in Their Traditional Context

1

Expressions involving Zeus are spread across the entire epic corpus. Zeus appears as a full-fledged character in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Theogony*, the *Works and Days*, the Homeric Hymns to Demeter and to Hermes, and he is frequently evoked by both the characters and the narrator in each one of the extant early epics. This not only allows us to examine Homeric expressions for Zeus against their traditional background but also provides a rare opportunity to study the formulaic system for a given essential idea against the widest possible spectrum of evidence.

Homer's expressions for Zeus were first studied in the light of formulaic theory by Milman Parry in *L'Épithète traditionnelle*, and Parry's tables of the principal types of Homer's formulae for gods and heroes are still widely consulted today.¹ The problem however is that Parry's tables do not always adequately represent the actual epic usage. This is especially true of the nominative expressions for Zeus placed between the feminine caesura and the end of the verse. Only two such expressions, the formula πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε ('the father of men and gods', 15x) and the unique Ὀλύμπιος εὐρύοπα Ζεύς ('far-seeing Olympian Zeus', 1x), are registered by Parry for the position in question. In his discussion of equivalent formulae later in the same work, he correctly dismisses the second expression as a unique extension of the widespread formula εὐρύοπα Ζεύς ('far-seeing Zeus', see also below),² thus leaving us with πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε as the only nominative formula for Zeus employed between the feminine caesura and the end of the verse.

However, even a cursory examination of Homer's references to Zeus will suffice to find out that no less than three full-fledged formulae equivalent to πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε are missing from Parry's list. These are (1) Κρόνου πάις ἀγκυλομήτεω ('the son of Kronos crooked of counsel', 8x), (2) ἐρίγδουπος πόσις

¹ All the references are to the English edition, see *MHV* 39, 57.

² *MHV* 179.

Ἡρης ('the loud-thundering husband of Hera', 7x), and (3) Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητής ('the Olympian lightener', 3x).³ This is not to say that these formulae are completely ignored by Parry: in fact, the linguistically late Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω is the only one of the three of whose existence he seems to be unaware; of the remaining two, Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητής is twice mentioned in passing,⁴ whereas ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης is, as we shall see immediately, discussed later in the same work. Let us examine these expressions one by one.

In that it starts with a vowel, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης ostensibly provides a useful prosodic alternative to its metrical equivalent πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε. It is remarkable in view of this that, contrary to his usual practice, Homer takes no advantage of the situation: on three of its seven occurrences the emergence of the formula ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης produces hiatus (*Il.* 7.411, *Od.* 8.465 = 15.180), and on one occasion (*Od.* 15.112) the *n*-movable is employed. This indicates clearly enough that ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης is a self-sufficient expression that has never been meant to replace πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε in metrical contexts unsuitable for the latter. In other words, from the point of view of formulaic economy the expression ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης is redundant.

Although he has never stated it explicitly, there can be little doubt in that Parry was aware of the problem posed by the formula ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης. Thus, in his discussion of this formula he draws attention to the fact that on five of its seven occurrences it belongs to a verse expressing a wish (*Il.* 7.411, 10.329; *Od.* 8.465 = 15.180 and 15.112) and on the two remaining ones (*Il.* 13.153 and 16.88) 'the idea of a wish, even though it is not made explicit, was still very much in the mind of the poet'; he deservedly refers to this phenomenon as 'a striking insight into the close relation between the noun-epithet formula and the idea of prayer'.⁵ In other words, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἡρης is a context-bound formula, and Parry apparently saw this as sufficient reason for not including it into his table of the principal formulae for Zeus.

Judging by its three occurrences in the epics (*Il.* only), the expression Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητής is also context-bound: it twice emerges in direct speech as part of a formulaic line containing a conditional clause (1.580 and 12.275), and twice is used in apposition to the name of Zeus (1.609 and 12.275). Parry's only comment on this formula is that it is formed after the dative Ζηνὶ ... ἀστεροπητῇ that occurs at *Iliad* 7.443 (*MHV* 179); yet, the latter expression's linguistic lateness

³ For a list of Homer's expressions for Zeus which includes both the formulaic and the non-formulaic expressions see Friedrich 2007, 38.

⁴ *MHV* 179, 181.

⁵ *MHV* 181.

(note the Ionism Ζηνί) and lack of formulaic fixity strongly suggest that the opposite would rather be true. However that may be, Parry obviously did not see this expression as significant enough to be included into his list of the principal formulae for Zeus.

This leaves us again with πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε as the only Homeric formula placed between the middle and the end of the verse that deserves to be counted among Homer's principal expressions for Zeus. A closer examination reveals that on nine of its fifteen occurrences the expression forms the second part in a wholly formulaic speech introduction, such as τὴν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα (*Il.* 1.544), ὧς ἔφατ', οὐδ' ἀπίθησε (4.68, 16.458), ὧς φάτο, μείδησεν δὲ (5.426, 15.47), τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε (15.12), τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε (22.167, 24.103; *Od.* 1.28); in one case, εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὄξυ νόησε at *Iliad* 8.132, it belongs to a wholly formulaic line built after the same model; and only in five cases (*Il.* 8.49, 11.182, 20.56; *Od.* 12.445, 18.137) it seems not to be associated with any particular context. In other words, πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε too is to a considerable extent context-bound.

What happens, then, when the need arises to introduce in the middle of the verse an expression for Zeus that is not part of a wish or a speech introduction? The answer is that in such cases Homer would employ the formula Κρόνου πάις ἀγκυλομήτεω, the very one that has not been taken into account by Parry. Remarkable in that it is an almost unique example of a Homeric formula characterized by such late linguistic feature as quantitative metathesis,⁶ this expression occurs both in direct speech (*Il.* 2.205 and 319, 9.37, 18.293) and in the main narrative (12.450; *Od.* 21.415), both in a simile (*Il.* 4.75) and in a speech introduction (16.431).⁷ In other words, it is much more flexible and, as a result, more widely applicable than all the other expressions for Zeus employed at the same metrical position.

2

Obviously, four equivalent formulae placed between the feminine caesura and the end of the verse are a far cry from what is understood by formulaic economy. Note now that neither Κρόνου πάις ἀγκυλομήτεω nor any other of the three Homeric formulae for Zeus which are metrically equivalent to πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν

⁶ See further Chantraine 1958, 70; Hoekstra 1965, 36 n. 1; Shipp 1972, 170–71, and above, ch. 8, 84.

⁷ With τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε in the first part of the verse; cf. *Il.* 15.12 (above), where the same expression is continued by πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

τε are attested beyond the Homeric corpus. Another Zeus formula whose application is similarly limited is βαρύκτυπος εὐρύοπα Ζεύς ('heavy-thundering far-seeing Zeus') which, emerging four times after the feminine caesura in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (3, 334, 441, 460), seems to be an innovation of the poet responsible for this composition. In view of the overwhelming popularity of πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε in early epic poetry (see below), it is hard to avoid the impression that the poet of the *Hymn to Demeter* deliberately abstained from using this standard epic formula for Zeus.⁸

Let us examine now the nominative formulae for Zeus placed at metrical positions other than the middle-verse caesura. These are (1) Ζεύς ὑψιβρεμέτης ('Zeus high-thundering') at the beginning of the verse (6x); (2) νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς ('Zeus cloud-gatherer') after the fourth-foot caesura (30x), and (3) the mutually complementary μητίετα Ζεύς ('Zeus the counsellor', 19x, voc. included) and εὐρύοπα Ζεύς ('far-seeing Zeus', 17x, voc. included) after the bucolic diaeresis (see the Table).⁹ Of these expressions, only νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς is doubled by an equivalent expression, namely, Ζεύς τερπικέραυνος ('Zeus delighting in thunder', 4x). The use of this supplementary formula which, as Parry pointed out (*MHV* 178), is suggested by the principal dative formula for Zeus Διὶ τερπικεραύνῳ (8x), may have been prompted by the fact that its more widespread equivalent νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς is closely associated with speech introductions and is therefore to a considerable extent context-bound.¹⁰

No less significantly, these very formulae are regularly employed at the same metrical positions in other early epic poetry as well. Thus, πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε is also attested for the *Theogony* (542, 643, 838), *Works and Days* (59), *Shield of Heracles* (27, 103), the Hesiodic corpus (13x),¹¹ and Eumelus (fr. 8 West); Ζεύς

⁸ I do not discuss here Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα μῆδεα εἰδώς ('Zeus knowing imperishable counsels'), the only nominative formula for Zeus which is introduced after the masculine caesura and which, therefore, cannot be considered a full metrical equivalent of πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε. It is attested in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* (43), in the *Theogony* (545, 550, 561) and the Hesiodic corpus (fr. 141.26, 234.2), but only once in Homer (*Il.* 24.88). As Richardson 1993, 286 *ad loc.*, points out, its modification, made metrically equivalent to πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, is introduced in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, see *H.Cer.* 321 πατήρ Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα εἰδώς.

⁹ I do not count the unique στεροπηνερέτα Ζεύς ('Zeus lightning-gatherer') at *Il.* 16.298. As already Parry pointed out (*MHV* 187), this expression is an *ad hoc* substitute of the regular formula νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς ('Zeus cloud-gatherer'), introduced in order to avoid the repetition of the preceding νεφέλην. See further Combella 1976; Friedrich 2007, 82.

¹⁰ The formula νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς appears in speech introductions in 20 of its 30 occurrences (*Il.* 1.517 and 560, 4.30, 5.764, 7.454, 8.38 and 469, 14.312 and 341, 15.220, 16.666, 20.19, 22.182, 24.64; *Od.* 1.63, 5.21, 12.384, 13.139 and 153, 24.477).

¹¹ [Hes.] fr. 30.8, 12, 28; 33a3; 51.1; 70.4; 75.25; 129.6, 9; 141.9; 177.10; 195.27; 205.3.

ὕψιβρεμέτης emerges in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* (329) and in Hesiod (*Th.* 601, *Op.* 8); νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (312), Hesiod (*Th.* 558, *Op.* 53), and the Hesiodic corpus ([Hes.] fr. 43a.78); μητίετα Ζεύς in three major Homeric hymns (*H. Ap.* 205, *H. Merc.* 469, *H. Ven.* 203) and in the Hesiodic corpus (*Th.* 56, 520, 904, 914, *Op.* 104, *Sc.* 33, 383, fr. 54a.11, 141.15, 21); finally, εὐρύοπα Ζεύς emerges in two Homeric hymns (*H. Ap.* 339, *H. Merc.* 540) and the Hesiodic corpus again (*Th.* 514, *Op.* 229, 239 and 281, fr. 1.15 and 211.8).

The same nominative expressions for Zeus emerge over and over again in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Theogony* and the *Work and Days*, the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles* and the *Catalogue of Women* (represented in the table by the abbreviation “fr.”), as well as in all major Homeric hymns. The same prosodic conventions are observed. Thus, as the doublet μητίετα Ζεύς / εὐρύοπα Ζεύς demonstrates, metrically equivalent formulae which differ only in their initial sounds are used throughout the entire epic corpus to prevent hiatus.¹² This allows us to conclude that all the expressions in question belong to the common stock of traditional formulae shared by the entire Greek epic tradition.

Accordingly, the common formulaic system for naming Zeus in the nominative case will look as follows:¹³

Ζεὺς ὕψιβρεμέτης :	υ υ / ⁴ – υ υ / ⁵ – υ υ / ⁶ – –	9x (<i>Il.</i> , <i>Od.</i> , <i>H.Merc.</i> , <i>Th.</i> , <i>Op.</i>)
¹ – υ υ / ² – υ υ / ³ – – :	πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε	37x (<i>Il.</i> , <i>Od.</i> , <i>Th.</i> , <i>Op.</i> , <i>Sc.</i> , fr., Eumelus)
¹ – υ υ / ² – υ υ / ³ – υ υ / ⁴ – :	νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς	34x (<i>Il.</i> , <i>Od.</i> , <i>H.Ap.</i> , <i>Th.</i> , <i>Op.</i> , fr.)
¹ – υ υ / ² – υ υ / ³ – υ υ / ⁴ – υ υ / ⁵ :	μητίετα Ζεύς	31x (<i>Il.</i> , <i>Od.</i> , <i>H.Ap.Merc.Ven.</i> , <i>Th.</i> , <i>Op.</i> , <i>Sc.</i> , fr.)
	/ ⁵ : εὐρύοπα Ζεύς	23x (<i>Il.</i> , <i>Od.</i> , <i>H.Ap.Ven.</i> , <i>Th.</i> , <i>Op.</i> , fr.)

Placing the equivalent formulae for Zeus against the formulaic system shared by the entire epic tradition vindicates the principle of economy that these formulae ostensibly undermine: the common formulaic system does keep only one nominative expression for Zeus for each principal metrical position. In that they do not cross the boundaries of the compositions in which they appear, neither Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω nor the other equivalent formulae under discussion can be considered part of this system.¹⁴

¹² The same is true of the genitives Διὸς νεφεληγερετάο / ἐρισθένης Κρονίωνος (*Il.*, *Od.*, *H.Ap.*, *Th.*, *Op.*) and the datives ὑπερμένει Κρονίωνι / κελαινεφεί Κρονίωνι (*Il.*, *H. Cer.*, *Th.*, *Sc.* fr.).

¹³ For the full paradigm see Finkelberg, forthcoming.

¹⁴ I discuss the tension between the tradition and the individual poet thus created in ch. 9, 102–103.

3

In the early years of oral-formulaic theory only the language of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was thought to be genuinely traditional whereas any parallels to it in other early epics were regarded as derivative and therefore unsuitable to be treated on a par with Homer. The recognition of the fact that, rather than issuing from imitation, early epic parallels to the language of Homer represent independent variants of a common tradition came slowly. As far as I can see, the turning point was C.P. Edwards' *The Language of Hesiod in Its Traditional Context* (1971) and Richard Janko's *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns. Diachronic development in epic diction* (1982). Yet, even if it is generally accepted today that the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the major Hymns, the *Theogony*, the *Works and Days*, as well as some other early hexametric poetry, share the same traditional language, their poetic idioms are rarely analyzed side-by-side with each other. As far as I can see, this is mainly due to the restrictive parameters adopted in the days when Homer was considered the only legitimate object of formulaic analysis. These parameters still cause many scholars to ignore everything that is not Homer. I hope that the following example will suffice to show that this kind of approach is not only outdated but also potentially unsafe.

When discussing in *L'Épithète traditionnelle* two equivalent genitive expressions for Hera, Ἥρης χρυσοπεδίου (*Od.* 11.604) and Ἥρης ἡυκόμοιο (*Il.* 10.5), both of them unique, Parry came to the conclusion that, while the latter should be identified as an underrepresented formula, the former is not only an innovation but also 'the work of a poet who had lost the sense of the ancient heroic rhythm'.¹⁵ But the relationship between the two alters radically as soon as the Hesiodic corpus is also taken into account. Here, the expression labelled by Parry as non-traditional emerges no less than three times, twice in the genitive and once in the accusative case (*Th.* 454, 952; fr. 229.9). By any standard, this would suffice to reverse Parry's verdict and to identify Ἥρης χρυσοπεδίου as a traditional formula.

By the same token, in that it is used in both Homer and other early hexametric poetry, the Homeric formula πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε should be identified as traditional. The same, however, cannot be said of its metrical equivalents Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἥρης, and Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητής, as well as of βαρύκτυπος εὐρύοπα Ζεύς, used in the same position in the Homeric *Hymn*

¹⁵ MHV 189. Cf. Shive 1987, 20: 'Parry found in all Homer only one nontraditional phrase: Ἥρης χρυσοπεδίου'.

to *Demeter*. This strongly suggests that these equivalent formulae should be identified as individual creations rather than as inherited expressions shared by the entire epic tradition. Following the terminology recently introduced into Homeric studies by Jonathan Ready, these expressions of limited circulation should be identified as ‘idiolectal formulae’.¹⁶ The existence of such formulae shows that the individual poet’s contribution to epic diction went far beyond the *ad hoc* formulaic modifications and unique nonformulaic expressions with which it is usually associated.

16 According to Ready, the traditional poet displays his competence moving around the spectrum of distribution which consists of both shared (dialectal and pan-traditional) and idiolectal elements. Although addressing the Homeric simile, Ready’s argument seems to be valid also for the other elements of epic diction, cf. Ready 2018, 166: ‘Put more expansively, traversing the figurative spectrum of distribution is one tactic a poet can adopt when he wishes to prove his ability to move around on the spectrum of distribution writ large and thereby to display his skill’.

Part II: **Homer and Heroic Tradition**

11 The First Song of Demodocus

Μοῦσ' ἄρ' αἰδὸν ἀνῆκεν αἰεδέμεναι κλέα ἀνδρῶν,
οἴμης, τῆς τότε' ἄρα κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἴκανε,
νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλεΐδew Ἀχιλλῆος,
ὥς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ θαλείῃ
ἐκπάγλοισ' ἐπέεσσιν, ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
χαῖρε νόψ, ὃ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο.
ὥς γάρ οἱ χρεῖων μυθήσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθ' ὑπέρβη λάτινον οὐδὸν
χρησόμενος. τότε γάρ ῥα κυλίνδετο πῆματος ἀρχὴ
Τρωσὶ τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλὰς.

And the Muse stirred the bard to sing of the deeds of men, from the story whose fame then reached the wide heaven, the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles Peleus' son: how once they attacked each other with violent words at a rich feast of gods, and Agamemnon, the lord of men, rejoiced in his mind that the best of the Achaeans were quarrelling, because so Phoebus Apollo had told him prophesying in holy Pytho, when he had crossed the stone threshold to ask his advice, for the beginning of calamity started to roll then on the Trojans and the Danaans through the designs of great Zeus.

(*Od.* 8.73–82; my translation)

The quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, about which the Phaeacian singer Demodocus sings at the beginning of a feast being held in Odysseus' honour, is neither attested to by any reliable tradition nor easily explicable from the internal standpoint of the epics.¹ It is thus not surprising that alongside attempts to discover the tradition to which it should be attributed, it has been argued that the subject of Demodocus' first song was simply invented by Homer.

In his article on the *Odyssey* in the *Realencyclopädie*, Peter von der Mühll suggested that the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles was an *autoschediasma* created with the intention of supplying Demodocus with material for his performance.² Though von der Mühll himself later abandoned this theory in favour of the hypothesis that the episode could be traced back to the *Cypria*,³ the view that Demodocus' first song is an 'Augenblickserfindung' was revived by Walter Marg.

¹ For a detailed survey and critical analysis of the testimonia see Marg 1956. Since Marg's important paper, Demodocus' first song has been discussed in Maehler 1963, 27 n. 1; Notopoulos 1964, 32–34; Rüter 1969, 247–54; Nagy 1979, 15–65, and *passim*; Braswell 1982, 130 n. 5; Clay 1983, 96–112, 241–46.

² Von der Mühll 1940, 718, 45–48.

³ Von der Mühll 1954. Cf. also Kullmann 1960, 100, 272.

According to Marg's theory, the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles was invented in order to generate an allusion to the proem of the *Iliad*, to which it bears a striking resemblance.⁴ Finally, B.K. Braswell argued that the subject of the song was invented by Homer in order to prepare the forthcoming quarrel between Odysseus and Euryalus the Phaeacian (*loc. cit.*).

Yet the plausibility of such arguments for Homer's invention of the subject of Demodocus' first song is undermined by the fact that none of them can justify the invention. Thus, though the resemblance observed by Marg between Demodocus' song and the proem of the *Iliad* is incontestable, it cannot be taken as conclusive proof of the invention both because it does not exclude the possibility that the poet had in mind some actually existing epic tradition⁵ and because resemblances of this kind, which are common enough in epic poetry, usually indicate that what is being dealt with are typical epic subjects based on a common pattern.⁶ Von der Mühl's original argument is untenable in view of the fact that if the poet's intention was simply to have Demodocus sing a song about Odysseus, instead of resorting to invention he could have used one of the episodes featuring Odysseus referred to elsewhere in the poem (see below). The same is true of Braswell's suggestion: if Demodocus' first song was intended to anticipate the quarrel of Odysseus and Euryalus, Odysseus' quarrel with Ajax (referred to in the first Nekyia, *Od.* 11.543–47) would have done just as well.

The explanation for Homer's invention of a given detail or theme is generally to be found in the demands of the immediate context.⁷ Now the only context of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles known to us is the context of Demodocus' performance, namely, Odysseus' feasting with the Phaeacians. The function of this episode in the poem as a whole is Odysseus' recognition by the Phaeacians (cf. Rüter 1969, 235–38). The vehicle for the recognition is the song of the

⁴ To support his interpretation, Marg adopted Calhoun's hypothesis of the 'misunderstood oracle': the oracle because of which the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles caused Agamemnon to rejoice in fact related to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, the main theme of the *Iliad*: see Calhoun 1939, 11 n. 25 and Marg 1956, 24–25. That the first song of Demodocus makes an allusion to the *Iliad* was accepted by Rüter and, in a modified form, Nagy; both, however, reject the hypothesis that it was invented by Homer, see Rüter 1969, 249–54; Nagy 1979, 59–65. Braswell 1982, 130 n. 5, and Clay 1983, 105–106, 241–43, though accepting the hypothesis as a whole, do not agree with Marg's motivation for the invention. Marg's hypothesis is totally rejected by Maehler 1963, 27 n. 1.

⁵ Thus Rüter 1969, 249–54, follows Marg in holding that the poet intended an allusion to the *Iliad* and also suggests a tradition from which the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles could derive.

⁶ As was shown in Notopoulos 1964, 33. Cf. also Maehler 1963, 27 n. 1; Clay 1983, 242–43.

⁷ See Willcock 1964 and 1977; Gaisser 1969; Braswell 1971.

Wooden Horse, Odysseus' major contribution to the Trojan War (*Od.* 8.500–20). Consequently, the function of Demodocus' first performance, which, like the one ending in Odysseus' recognition, causes Odysseus to weep and his host Alcinous to notice this, must be to prepare the climax at the end of the episode.⁸

Assuming that the poet chose to anticipate the recognition by doubling the motif, he would have been faced with the problem of making Demodocus sing a song about Odysseus the Trojan hero which was not, however, the song of the Wooden Horse. This undoubtedly restricted the range of subjects at his disposal, leaving him the *ptoliporthos* hero of the Trojan saga but excluding Odysseus of the *Odyssey*, the man 'of many wiles'. In addition to the Wooden Horse, the episode most frequently referred to in the *Odyssey* (4.271–89, 8.500–20, 11.523–32), the poem also touches upon such episodes as Odysseus' entering Troy in disguise, his participation in the battle over Achilles' corpse, and his rivalry with Ajax (4.240–58; 5.309–10; 11.543–47). These are all well-known Trojan subjects, attested in the Epic Cycle.⁹ Thus one can argue for Homer's invention of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles only if one can provide a satisfactory answer to the following question: what made Homer invent a new subject instead of using one of the well-known Trojan episodes featuring Odysseus referred to elsewhere in the poem?

Note that the subjects mentioned in the poem have one feature in common—they are all concerned with the final stages of the Trojan War. This is also true of the song of the Wooden Horse sung by Demodocus at Odysseus' invitation. Characteristically, the point at which the song stops is the arrival of Odysseus and Menelaus at the house of Deiphobus, the place where Helen was found.¹⁰ The song of the Wooden Horse as sung by Demodocus, implying as it does Helen's return to the Greeks, is thus a song about the end of the Trojan War. When asking for this song, Odysseus says to the singer: 'Come, switch now and sing about the fashioning of the Wooden Horse' (8.492–93 ἀλλ' ἄγε δὲ μετάβηθι καὶ ἵππου κόσμον ἄεισον / δουρατέου). His previous praise of the veracity of Demodocus' account of Trojan events (8.489–90) makes it clear that the request to 'switch' refers to Demodocus' preceding song on the Trojan theme, that of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles.¹¹ Significantly, Homer's description of Demodocus'

⁸ Cf. Fenik 1974, 102–104. According to Fenik, 'the controversial double weeping of Odysseus in θ seems to be a hybrid between the interruption structure and the anticipatory doublet' (102).

⁹ Cf. *Aethiopis* (Allen 1912, 106.9–11, 15–17 = arg. 3, 4 West) and *Ilias parva* (Allen 1912, 106.20–23; 107.4–7 = arg. 1, 4 West).

¹⁰ *Od.* 8.517–20, cf. *Iliou persis* (*The Sack of Troy*) (Allen 1912, 108, 1–2 = arg. 2 West).

¹¹ And not the song of Ares and Aphrodite sung by Demodocus in between. On the function of Demodocus' second song in *Odyssey* 8 see Burkert 1960 and Braswell 1982.

first song ends with the following words: 'For the beginning of calamity started to roll then on Trojans and Danaans through the designs of great Zeus' (8.81–82). The relation between the two songs, emphasized by Odysseus' *μετόβηθι*,¹² is thus the relation between the beginning and the end of the Trojan War.

It was assumed above that the function of Demodocus' first performance was to anticipate Odysseus' recognition by doubling the motif. Since, for obvious reasons, the poet could not simply have the bard sing the same song twice (as he repeated the weeping/noticing sequence), doubling by contrast was another traditional device answering his needs. That is, if the song by means of which Odysseus ought to be recognized dealt with the end of the Trojan War, the most suitable vehicle for the anticipation of this recognition was a song dealing with the war's beginning.¹³ This is the context in which the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles makes its appearance.

While accounting for Homer's preferring this subject to better known episodes of the Trojan War, the need for a subject featuring Odysseus at the beginning of the war does not necessarily entail invention on the part of the poet. The question is, of course, whether he had sufficient material at his disposal to fulfil the demands of his compositional technique. However, even the most cursory examination of the epic subjects featuring Odysseus at the beginning of the Trojan War reveals that this was not the case. The *Cypria* mentions only two episodes involving Odysseus—his pretending to be mad, not wishing to join the Trojan expedition, and the killing of Palamedes.¹⁴ Clearly, neither of these subjects is appropriate to the *ptoliporthos* hero whom the poet intended to portray in Demodocus' songs. Hence, we can infer that it was the requirements of Homer's compositional technique and the lack of traditional material fit to meet these requirements that necessitated Homer's invention of the subject of Demodocus' first song.¹⁵

12 Cf. von der Mühl 1940, 718, 37–44.

13 That this sort of ordering of the material is deeply rooted in the poet's compositional technique has been demonstrated by Bernard Fenik. See for example his comment on the conversation between the ghosts in the second *Nekyia* in Fenik 1974, 149: 'Alternating repetition of the sort performs an elementary but useful function in supporting the desired emphases and contrasts, and probably also as a kind of compass for the poet to keep himself oriented in his narrative and to insure both order and pleasing variation. It is just this sort of repetition and basic symmetrical ordering that would be useful to an oral poet as he put his scene together'.

14 Allen 1912, 103, 25–27; 105, 15–16 and fr. xxi (= *Cypr.* arg. 5, 12 and fr. 27 West).

15 The question whether it was the model of the *Iliad* that prompted the poet to introduce the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles exceeds the limits of the present discussion.

It is, of course, true that any argument in favour of an invention is basically an argument *ex silentio* (see Maehler, *loc. cit.*), and we can never be certain that the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles is not an echo of an obscure tradition. Note, however, that Odysseus' quarrel with the greatest of the Achaean heroes emphasizes his heroic characteristics which, on our hypothesis, was one of the poet's desiderata in the context of this episode,¹⁶ while its association with the beginning of the Trojan War, creating a contrast to Demodocus' concluding song about the fall of Troy, fulfils his other requirement. It seems unlikely to me that the way in which the subject of the song fits the context of *Odyssey* 8 is incidental. The same can be said of the indefinite terms in which the content of Demodocus' first song is rendered. The cause of the quarrel is not mentioned. Its setting, 'a rich feast of gods', is about as vague as a designation of location can be. The time of its occurrence ('once') is explicitly indefinite. 'Es ist nicht epischer Stil, in einem Referat so sprunghaft auszuwählen, dass es in sich nicht recht verständlich scheint' (Marg 1956, 21). Considering that the first song of Demodocus was already regarded as a *zētēma* by the Alexandrians, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles was invented by Homer especially for Demodocus' performance before Odysseus at Alcinous' feast.

¹⁶ For the same reason, the subject of the Wooden Horse is modified in the third song of Demodocus so as to make Odysseus participate in the return of Helen—in the *Iliou persis*, it is Menelaus alone who goes to the house of Deiphobus to take back his wife (*Od.* 8.517–20; Allen 1912, 108. 1–2 = *Sack* arg.2 West). Cf. analogous modifications of the same subject in *Od.* 4.271–89 and 11.523–32.

12 A Creative Oral Poet and the Muse

Though no special demonstration is necessary to show that a characteristic feature of the ancient Greek epic tradition is its provision for the poet's divine inspiration, the idiom of the Muses is only too rarely translated into terms of oral practice. However, the invocations of the Muses which are found throughout the *Iliad* and in the proem of the *Odyssey*, as well as such Homeric lines as 'the Muse stirred the bard to sing the glories of men',¹ show that the Muses were seen as active participants in the oral poet's improvisation in performance, when the creation of the epic song out of a given traditional subject takes place. In this paper, I intend to examine, on the basis of ancient Greek and Southslavic epic poetry, whether the provision made in the former for the idea of the poet's inspiration by the Muse can be seen to account for some of the differences between these two epic traditions.

1

Whatever the objective historical accuracy of traditional poetry may be, a factor of utmost importance in understanding the traditional poet's status is both his and his audience's view of the epic song as essentially an account of events that really happened. Both Homer and the Southslavic singers are unambiguous on this point. In Homer, it is said that not the poets, but Zeus is to be held responsible for the content of a song, in that he caused the events of which the poets sing to happen; on another occasion, it is said of a poet that he sings about everything that the Achaeans suffered at Troy 'in perfectly good order', as if he were an eyewitness of these events.² In the Southslavic tradition, addition, omission, and conflation of heterogeneous subjects are unanimously condemned because they are seen as distorting the truth of the story.³ But, though both Greek and Southslavic epic tradition claim to be veracious, their claims to veracity are based on different premises. To illustrate the point, let us compare a Greek and a

¹ *Od.* 8.73; see also *Il.* 1.1, 2.484 and 761, 11.218, 14.508, 16.112; *Od.* 1.1 and 10.

² *Od.* 1.347–49, 8.489–91. On the connection between an orderly and a truthful account in Homer see Krischer 1965, 167–70 and ch. 2 above.

³ *SHS* 1954, 239–40, 242–43, 245 (Demail Zogić), 266 (Sulejman Makić), 338, n. 37 (Salih Ugljanin); *SHS* 1974, 60, 66, 71–72 (Avdo Mededović). That the statements of the Southslavic singers concerning their art are parallel to Homer's qualifying the epic song in terms of orderly succession has been pointed out by Hainsworth 1970, 96.

Southslavic poet's treatment of such a typical form of epic expansion as the extended catalogue.

In Avdo Mededović's version of *The Wedding of Smailagić Meho*, the list of chieftains invited to the wedding includes a much greater number of names than does the song from the songbook which served as the poet's model; moreover, the list of guests who arrived in response to the invitations contains names not mentioned in the invitations themselves.⁴ While admitting the fact, Avdo Mededović does not agree that the additional names could be his own invention, but insists that he learned them from other singers: 'From where would I know these buljukašas and standard-bearers, and agas and elders if I had not learned from them [the singers of the former generation], heard them from them, and taken them into my mind?'⁵

We cannot check of course whether in the Catalogue of Ships in Book 2 of the *Iliad* Homer deviates from his prototypes, but the fact is that there are significant discrepancies between this great catalogue and the rest of the poem.⁶ How Homer would have explained himself on this point we can learn from his invocation of the Muses introducing the Catalogue:

Tell me now, you Muses who have your homes on Olympus. For you, who are goddesses, are there, and you know all things, but we have heard only the rumour of it and know nothing. Who then of those were the chief men and the lords of the Danaans?⁷

Like Avdo Mededović, Homer would deny that the Catalogue is his own invention. However, he would equally reject an explanation similar to that proposed by the Southslavic poet: the tradition, or 'what we hear', is also not envisaged as sufficiently reliable. The true guarantors of the catalogue's authenticity are the omnipresent and omniscient Muses, who inspire the poet and are thus responsible for his song. The disagreement between the two poets on this specific point reflects, I believe, an essential difference between the two traditions they represent.

To the Southslavic singers, the guarantee of the song's truthfulness is the tradition itself. To sing 'what one has heard and exactly as it happened' is the idea passing as a leitmotif through the Southslavic poets' accounts of their art. To the Greeks, the guarantee of the song's truthfulness lies in the Muses who witnessed the events that happened in the past and hand on their evidence to the poet. In

⁴ *SCHS* 1974, 167–74, 264–65 n. 133; cf. Lord 1960, 106.

⁵ *SCHS* 1974, 264–65 n. 133.

⁶ See, e.g., the discussion in Kirk 1985, 168–87.

⁷ *Il.* 2.484–87, transl. R. Lattimore.

Greek tradition, therefore, 'what has happened' amounts not so much to 'what the poets heard from their predecessors', as is the case with the Southslavic singers, but, rather, to 'what the Muses tell to the poets'. In other words, while the Southslavic poet sees himself as first and foremost a preserver of the tradition, the ancient Greek poet sees himself as a mouthpiece of the Muse. Accordingly, the poet's creativity in the two traditions in question cannot be possessed of the same status.

In a tradition basing its claim to truthfulness on 'what the poet heard from his predecessors', the poet's free treatment of the material handed down to him can well cast doubt on the veracity of his account: if one sings about things of which he did not hear from others, the natural conclusion will be that he has invented those things by himself. 'There are some people', Demail Zogić says, 'who add and ornament a song and say: "This is the way it was", but it would be better, brother, if he were to sing as he heard it and as things happened'.⁸ And even Avdo Mededović, whose distinctive style was characterized by lavish expansion allowing for the composition of songs much longer than those of other Southslavic singers, accounts for his art in similar terms. Thus, he holds a singer who does not ornament his songs very much to be just as good as himself, because 'his song would go straight along, smoothly and cleanly, so no one could say of it: "There's a bit of a lie in this one!"', while on another occasion he reveals that he is in fact even not certain whether his own individual practice of rich ornamentation is 'good or bad'.⁹ In the Southslavic oral tradition the poet's creativity has no niche to be classed in, and a creative poet enjoys no privileged status.

In the Greek tradition, the idea of the poet's inspiration by the Muse offers an excellent alibi for creative intervention. Thanks to this idea, each of the poet's innovations automatically gains the status of divine truth in virtue of its origin in divine inspiration. That is to say, if one sings of things of which he did not hear from his predecessors, this can only mean that he was told those things by the Muse. 'I am self taught (*autodidaktos*)', the Ithacan bard Phemius boasts in the *Odyssey*, 'and God has planted into my heart all manner of song'.¹⁰ Thus, paradoxically, the Greek poet's dependence on the Muse both allows for a greater freedom on his part and gives legitimation to this creative freedom. It can be safely presumed indeed that, unlike Avdo Mededović, Homer would have no difficulty

⁸ *SCHS* 1954, 239. Cf. also Sulejman Makić's words *ibid.* 266: 'What's the good of adding things that didn't happen. One must sing what one has heard and exactly as it happened'.

⁹ *SCHS* 1974, 71–72, 74.

¹⁰ *Od.* 22.347–48.

in accounting for his individual creativity. In his tradition, the natural way of explaining why one singer is able to ornament his songs more than another would be that 'the Muse likes him more'.¹¹ Greek tradition thus affords a creative poet a privileged status of the favourite of the Muses. The question, however, is how this observation can be translated into the terms of oral poets' practice.

2

It is a well-known thing about oral poetry that, though each of the limited range of traditional subjects, or 'stories', dealt with by a given tradition is fixed in respect of its main outline, each version of a song treating the same story is individual, differing from one poet to another. This difference is due to the fact that while the essence of a story remains the same in all its versions, its expansion by means of recurring typical motifs, or 'themes', varies depending on the stock of such themes at a given poet's disposal, his taste for expansion, and his ability to expand. Thus there is a tension between the fixity of the story and the looseness of its expansion, which amounts in fact to tension between the poet's commitment to preserve the tradition and his creative freedom.¹²

As the stories constituting the saga, regarded as they were as truth about the past, were a matter of common knowledge rather than the poet's exclusive prerogative, this is undoubtedly the area in which creative intervention on the poet's part was reduced to a minimum. Indeed, whether or not divinely inspired, no poet could possibly offer his audience a song about heroes whom neither he himself nor his audience believed to have existed or about events not believed to have taken place; similarly, a song that substantially changed the main outline of a given story might well have left the poet open to the charge that he was either incompetent or deliberately lying.¹³ Consequently, the traditional poet's creative freedom must have commenced at the point where the material fixed in the saga ended. As Kurt Latte put it: 'Der stofflichen "Erfindung" zieht die Sage, die ja als reales Geschehen gilt, enge Grenzen. Achill *hat* Hektor erschlagen, Troja *ist* von den Griechen erobert, daran kann der Sanger nichts ändern. Die Einzelheiten mag er freilich aus der Kraft mitlebender Phantasie frei gestalten'.¹⁴ In terms of

¹¹ Cf., e.g., *Od.* 8.63–64.

¹² Cf. Lord 1960, 28–29; Bowra 1962, 39.

¹³ Cf. Lord 1960, 28: 'if the singer changes what he has heard in its essence, he falsifies truth'.

¹⁴ Latte 1946, 69 (Latte's emphasis).

the oral practice, this would mean that it is only in thematic expansion of a given traditional subject that the oral poet's creativity can be realized.¹⁵

Now, if an oral poet treats a given subject in a song, say, of about 3000 verses, and another yields a song twice as long on the same subject,¹⁶ the difference between the two obviously derives from the fact that the latter poet does more to expand his subject by means of the thematic material at his disposal. That is to say, a poet composing longer songs is in fact a more creative one. By the same token, a tradition allowing for the composition of longer songs can be called a more creative tradition in comparison with one whose songs are normally short. This is obviously the case with the Greek and Southslavic epic traditions. Indeed, though it is true that Avdo Mededović was found able to extemporize songs as long as the Homeric poems, it cannot be denied that his longest songs are not representative of his regular repertoire and, what is far more important, of the repertoire of the other Southslavic singers.¹⁷ As distinct from this, there is reason to conjecture that, though the length of the Homeric poems might well have been exceptional in the Greek tradition itself, this tradition generally produced much longer poems than was the norm among the Southslavic poets.¹⁸ It follows, then, that while the Greek and Southslavic traditions are similar in that both preserve the essential stories constituting the saga, they diverge in their practice of expanding these essential stories into epic songs. Now this is precisely the area which is construed differently in the two traditions in question, because of the different ways in which they premise their claims to truthfulness.

Since in Southslavic heroic poetry the guarantee of the song's truthfulness is the tradition itself, the emphasis here is placed on preservation. Consequently, such a tradition would tend to restrain the poets' freedom in adding to the mate-

¹⁵ Of course, creativity also existed on the level of language, but this question exceeds the limits of the present discussion.

¹⁶ As is the case of the song *Bećiragić Meho*, performed by Mumin Vlahovjak and Avdo Mededović, see Lord 1960, 78–81, 223–34.

¹⁷ The two longest songs performed by Avdo Mededović, *Osmanbeg Delibegović and Pavičević Luka* and *The Wedding of Smailagić Meho*, contained 13,331 and 12,323 lines respectively; however, according to the list adduced in *SCHS* 1974, 6–7, the average length of a song by Avdo Mededović was about 5000 verses. Unfortunately, in the list of songs of the Parry-Lord Collection published in *SCHS* 1954, 21–45, no indications of length are given, but the average of songs of the singers of Novi Pazar included in this volume is 1012 ten-syllable lines (or 675 fifteen-syllable Homeric lines; see Notopoulos 1964, 10). Even if we raise this figure to 2000, Avdo Mededović's longest songs would still be about six times(!) as long as the average song in his tradition.

¹⁸ Thus, the Greek poems of the Epic Cycle were probably only half as long as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see the figures in Lord 1960, 153–54.

rial handed down by their predecessors, in that such adding runs the risk of distorting the essential story and, eventually, the truth. The poet's expansion of a 'story' into a 'song' is however indispensable for oral poetry, constituting its very essence. Hence, the restraining influence of such a conservative tradition would express itself not in that it would not allow for poetic expansion of traditional subjects, but in that it would put a limit on it, developing mostly themes that would not affect what may be called the essential facts of a given story. One can see that the themes employed in Southslavic poetry, whether termed 'essential' (as, for example, the theme of assembly) or 'ornamental' (as the theme of arming), are precisely of this kind.¹⁹ Since the song's length is, as we saw, a function of its thematic development, it would be only natural that songs in such a preservation-oriented tradition would be relatively short.

As thematic analysis of epic poetry qua oral poetry developed on the basis of the material of Southslavic epic, it naturally emphasized the similarities in the thematic stock of Greek and Southslavic poetry. This created a tacit assumption that, in expanding their subjects, the Greek and the Southslavic poets used essentially the same themes. When put in concrete terms, such an assumption would lead to the inference, unacceptable to a Homerist, that the basic subject of the wrath of Achilles was developed into the *Iliad* as we have it by means of such themes as arming or assembly. But if we wish the thematic analysis to be applied with profit to the Homeric epics, it should take into account any 'recurrent element of narration or description',²⁰ whether or not such an element is paralleled in Southslavic epic poetry. Application of this criterion to the material of the Greek epics permits one to single out a number of themes characteristic of Greek epic tradition alone.

¹⁹ The distinction between the 'essential' and the 'ornamental' themes was introduced by A.B. Lord in 'Composition by Theme in Homer and Southslavic Epos', see Lord 1951, 74. Elsewhere, Lord gives a fuller description of his understanding of the epic song's thematic arrangement: 'We may say that any song is a grouping of themes which are essential to the telling of the tale plus such descriptive or ornamental themes as the singer chooses either habitually or at the moment of performance to use as decoration for the story', see Lord 1962, 191. It seems, however, that Lord's designation of such a theme as the assembly as 'essential' risks blurring the functional distinction between the 'facts' contained in a given story and its thematic development: what is essential to the *Song of Bagdad* (discussed *ibid.*, 188–89) is its subject, that is, the capture of Bagdad by a Bosnian hero, rather than the assembly with which a song about this event begins. The assembly is only essential to the thematic development of the basic story, that is, to the plot of the song. In view of this, designation of such themes as 'plot-making' seems to reflect more precisely their function in oral composition.

²⁰ Lord's definition of the theme in Lord 1951, 73.

It is true of course that the basic themes of arming, catalogue, assembly, recognition, and the like, are common to both Greek and Southslavic epic poetry. The fact however is that the Greek epics seem to be possessed also of other themes, which allow for expanding of a given subject much more effectively and, moreover, with much greater influence on the plot than those mentioned above. Let us take, for example, such a recurrent motif as the *aristeia* in the *Iliad*:²¹ in a sequence of single combats, one of the protagonists kills a number of minor opponents, some of whom were surely called into existence in order to contribute to the glory of a prominent hero by their deaths at his hand. Without altering the essence of the story of the wrath of Achilles, the *aristeia* contributes to the development of the plot of the poem. Another such motif is that of the unresolved combat: two protagonists meet on the battlefield; in the subsequent fight one of them gains the upper hand, but at the last moment the death of the defeated hero is prevented, mainly thanks to divine intervention.²² The theme of the unresolved combat allows the poet to put all the protagonists in action,²³ to introduce dramatic turns not provided for by the story as such and thus, again, to enrich the plot of the poem. Finally, there is also the so-called 'almost' motif, consisting in the poet's introduction of an extreme situation leading to a decisive turn in the course of events, especially the end of the Trojan War; at the last moment, however, the gods interfere to prevent what would have been at variance with destiny or, for that matter, with the course of events fixed in the saga.²⁴ In that they only expand the story without changing its basic 'facts', all such motifs serve the same purpose as, say, the theme of arming; but their distinctive characteristic is that

²¹ For the full treatment of this Homeric motif see Krischer 1971, 12–89.

²² Krischer 1971, 14–15 regards this theme as a subdivision of the *aristeia*; however, he recognizes that only the combat culminating in the death of the hero's opponent can be regarded as the *aristeia* par excellence. Bernard Fenik refers the theme of the unresolved combat to the typology of a 'rescue scene': see, e.g., his analysis of the rescue of Aeneas defeated by Diomedes in Book 5 of the *Iliad* in Fenik 1968, 36–39.

²³ And not only those who are to be killed in a given episode. One can see indeed that such major single combats of the *Iliad* as Menelaus-Paris and Hector-Ajax, described in Books 3 and 7 of the poem, could only be left unresolved: according to the saga, Hector will be killed by Achilles, Paris by Philoctetes, Ajax will commit suicide shortly before the capture of Troy, and Menelaus will safely return home; cf. Kirk 1978, 23. Note also that, in spite of the huge amount of military activity described in the *Iliad*, the poem contains only three major deaths, all in causal connection with each other: Sarpedon slain by Patroclus, Patroclus by Hector, and Hector by Achilles.

²⁴ This motif has been identified by Reinhardt 1961, 107–20. See also Fenik 1968, 153–54, 175–76 and Fenik 1978, 80–81.

they interweave with the main story, developing and enriching it with an efficiency which could never have been achieved by the poet's using such themes as that of arming.

Thus, not only do the themes employed in Greek tradition not entirely coincide with those of the Southslavic tradition, but the characteristic feature of these themes is that they are more, so to say, 'plot-making' than those encountered in Southslavic epic poetry.²⁵ If my previous argument is correct, the factor responsible for this feature of Greek epic is the Muse.

As Greek tradition bases its claim to truthfulness on the poet's divine inspiration, the poet's adding to the traditional models at his disposal would be envisaged here not as distortion of the truth but, rather, as the natural effect of his contact with the Muses, who provide him with additional information about events that happened in the past.²⁶ As a result, such an inspiration-oriented tradition would also develop themes that interweave with the main outlines of the stories contained in the saga, so that every story would be made richer and, correspondingly, longer, without at the same time losing its basic identity. Discussions among Homeric scholars as to whether such major episodes as the Patrocleia in the *Iliad* or the Telemachy in the *Odyssey* should be regarded as belonging to the original saga or to its later development may act as illustration of this.²⁷ Thus, an inspiration-oriented tradition would not only not restrain the poet's individual creativity but, in a sense, would even encourage it.

Creative ability, however, is a personal quality, which cannot directly derive from encouragement or lack of encouragement in a given tradition. Avdo Mededović affords an excellent example. However, highly creative poet as he was, Avdo Mededović had at his disposal only what his tradition could offer him: though he proved able to expand the subjects current in his tradition so that his songs were made as long as the Homeric poems, this expansion was mainly

²⁵ The view that the conventional thematic analysis does not cover the compositional techniques of Homer has been put forward in Krischer 1971, 9. However, Krischer draws from this what seems to me a wrong conclusion, namely, that thematic analysis is inapplicable to such compositional elements of the Homeric epic as, for example, the *aristeia*; it would be much more economical to extend our concept of theme so that it may also apply to the Homeric *aristeia* than to invent a separate set of categories for it.

²⁶ Note that Odysseus explains the Phaeacian singer Demodocus' ability to give a truthful account of events of the Trojan War in that the singer was taught about these events 'either by the Muse or by Apollo' (*Od.* 8.487–91).

²⁷ According to a distinguished Homerist, only five out of the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* (Books 1, 11, 16, 18, and 22) are essential to the plot of the poem, the rest resulting from poetic expansion of its basic subject; see Mazon 1943, 243–48.

achieved by means of over-ornamentation, and the length of the poems expanded under Milman Parry's encouragement is considerably disproportionate in respect of the stories they deliver.²⁸

Again, the mere fact that a poet belongs to a creative tradition still does not endow him with creative ability of his own. The example of the Greek epics of the Epic Cycle is a good illustration of how mediocre poetry can be composed in a creative tradition.²⁹ However, if such a tradition gives rise to a great poet, it will provide him with all the necessary tools for realization of his creative genius. It is generally recognized indeed that the emergence of an epic poem as great as the *Iliad* was only possible in an especially rich epic tradition. That is to say, though the overall design of the *Iliad* might well belong to an individual poet, the tools for expanding the subject of the wrath of Achilles into a monumental poem about the Trojan War were given to the poet by his tradition.

Thus, though it can be safely presumed that the tension between the oral poet's commitment to preserve the tradition and his artistic creativity is common to both the Greek and Southslavic epic traditions, the emphases are put differently. This seems to demand that, within the genre of oral epic, we should distinguish two main subdivisions—the oral poetry premised on the authority of tradition and the oral poetry premised on the authority of divine inspiration. The majority of heroic traditions possess no idea of divine inspiration, and their songs are correspondingly short. Consider, however, the words of a Kara-Kirghiz akyn startlingly resembling Phemius' words in the *Odyssey*: 'I can sing every song; for God had planted the gift of song in my heart. He gives me the word on my tongue without my having to seek it. I have not learned any of my songs; everything springs from my inner being, from myself'.³⁰ It can hardly be a mere coincidence that the Kara-Kirghiz oral tradition is, similar to the Greek, an oral tradition which allowed for the creation of poems monumental in both length and design.

²⁸ Cf. Kirk 1976, 203.

²⁹ On this subject see, e.g., Hainsworth 1970, 97.

³⁰ See Bowra 1952, 41. Cf. also Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969, 332–33.

13 How Could Achilles' Fame Have Been Lost?

...and of that stuff they cast to build
A Citie & Towre, whose top may reach to Heav'n;
And get themselves a name, least far disperst
In foraign Lands thir memorie be lost,
Regardless whether good or evil fame.

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

1

'Epic poetry preserves for posterity the glorious deeds of heroes'. It is more or less generally agreed that this formulation would appropriately represent the objective of epic poetry in general and Homer's poetry in particular. It is also agreed that no one better answers this description than Achilles, the greatest of heroes, whose deeds have been preserved in the greatest of epic poems. Yet Achilles' own view in *Iliad* 9 of the possible alternatives before him does not entirely conform with such assumptions. 'For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me', Achilles says,

'I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either, if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans, my return home is gone, but my fame (*kleos*) shall be imperishable; but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers, my noble fame is gone, but there will be a long life left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly'.¹

That of all Achaean heroes it was Achilles whose fame might have fallen into oblivion casts doubt on the validity of the widespread view that heroic deeds on the battlefield guarantee everlasting glory in posterity.² Following T.B.L. Webster, I shall henceforth refer to this view as the 'monument theory' of epic poetry.³ Indeed, up to the moment that Achilles pronounced his speech, his warlike exploits surpassed by far those of any other Achaean hero, and he was unanimously

1 *Il.* 9.410–16; transl. R. Lattimore, slightly adapted.

2 As formulated, for example, in Schmitt 1967, 67–68: 'Der Ruhm, den sich der Held im Kampf erwirbt, wird ja im Verse des Dichters weiterleben'.

3 Webster 1939, 166. To my knowledge, Webster is the only scholar to have directly questioned the relevance of the 'monument theory' to Homer's epics: he argued that the functions ascribed by this theory to poetry are carried out in Homer by the hero's tomb and that the approach itself is relevant to post-Homeric poets rather than to Homer (*ibid.*, 173).

recognized as the greatest of the heroes who fought at Troy. Still, had he left the siege in the tenth year of the war, his fame would have been lost. I do not see how such a situation can be explained from the standpoint of the 'monument theory', and this leads us to inquire into the character of the evidence on which this theory is based.

In the conception of epic poetry represented by the 'monument theory', the key word is *kleos*. It is important to keep in mind in this connection that it would be inaccurate to attach the meaning 'glory' or, moreover, 'song', to all Homer's usages of *kleos*. Although epic songs are twice designated in the poems by this term,⁴ it cannot be denied that, especially when *kleos* is applied to the present, its Homeric meaning is often simply 'rumour' (see above, ch. 7, 68). 'Rumour', however, is not what epic poetry deals with. As the famous invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2.485–86 demonstrates, the privileged realm of song begins where human witness ends: 'For you, who are goddesses, are there, and you know all things, but we have heard only the rumour (*kleos*) of it and know nothing'. In other words, only where preservation of a given subject is rendered in terms of longevity outreaching first-hand evidence, would poetry presumably be the means by which such a subject would be perpetuated or immortalized.

Furthermore, though it may be employed as a neutral term, *kleos* is never used in Homer in a negative sense. Hence if we follow only such Homeric contexts as concern long-lasting memory of a certain subject that employ the term *kleos*, we shall inevitably arrive at the kind of generalization on which the 'monument theory' seems to be based. Yet *kleos* is not the only way to express such meanings in the Homeric poems. Thus, the formula καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι ('even men yet to be born will hear [of it]') is even more favoured by Homer than the expressions employing the term *kleos*.⁵ Moreover, the only Homeric formula expressing the idea of preservation of a given subject in posterity by means of song, καὶ ἔσσομένοισιν ἀοιδῇ ('song for men yet unborn'), is an obvious derivative from this expression.⁶

When at *Iliad* 22.304–305 Hector says that before his death he will accomplish something great 'whereof men yet to be born shall hear' (καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι), it is clear that the same idea could be expressed just as well by employing the term *kleos*. But consider *Iliad* 2.119–22, where Agamemnon says that the shame of the Achaeans' retreat from Troy will become known even to men yet unborn (αἰσχρὸν γὰρ τόδε γ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι), or *Odyssey* 21.253–

⁴ κλέα ἀνδρῶν *Il.* 9.189, *Od.* 8.73.

⁵ See *Il.* 2.119; 22.305; *Od.* 11.76, 21.255, 24.433; cf. also καὶ ἔσσομένηνσιν ὀπίσσω at *Od.* 11.433.

⁶ *Od.* 3.204 (v.l. καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι), 8.580. Cf. also ἀοιδμοὶ ἔσσομένοισιν at *Il.* 6.358.

55, where Eurymachus says that the Suitors' inability to draw Odysseus' bow will bring disgrace upon them, of which even men yet unborn will hear (ἐλεγχεῖν δὲ καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι). Although these two passages also express the idea of the preservation of a given subject in posterity, their negative connotations preclude the term *kleos* from being employed in either of them. Other such passages are *Odyssey* 11.432–33 and 24.433–35 and, in application to poetry, *Odyssey* 24.194–202. The latter makes the limitations on the usage of the term *kleos* especially obvious: although both Penelope's and Clytaemnestra's story are said to supply the subject for a future song, it is only in Penelope's case that the term *kleos* is applied.⁷ In other words, the expressions employing the term *kleos* account for only part of Homer's means of communicating the idea that a given subject is worth preservation in posterity. Consequently, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the 'monument theory' of epic poetry is based on a generalization of only part of the relevant evidence.⁸

There is thus reason to suppose that if we consider, in addition to the *kleos*-expressions, such Homeric expressions of the idea of perpetuating a given subject in posterity that do not employ the term *kleos*, the picture of what Homer saw as worth perpetuation would be quite different from the one emerging from the 'monument theory'. What conception of epic poetry could indeed correspond to the idea that not only glorious and heroic deeds should be preserved in songs? As a possible answer, Werner Jaeger's educational theory can be considered. According to Jaeger, Homer's poetry 'chooses and presents its truth in accordance with a definite ideal', and its objective is training of mind and character by means of exemplary life-patterns from the past.⁹ It can be seen that this explanation of what was regarded by Homer as worth preservation in poetry, accounting as it does for not only praiseworthy but also for reprehensible deeds, is much more flexible than that proposed by the 'monument theory'. The problem, however, is, that, as some scholars have argued, the Penelope-Clytaemnestra comparison in

⁷ See οἱ κλέος οὔ ποτ' ὀλεῖται at *Od.* 24.196.

⁸ This difficulty was envisaged by Gregory Nagy, who proposed distinguishing between 'song of glorification', which alone preserves *kleos*, and song dealing with evil deeds, misfortune, or defeat, see Nagy 1974, 261: 'what you experienced may indeed be unforgettable (ἄλαστα), so that singers will always sing of it, but it is not κλέος ἄφθιτον...'. Helpful as it is for delimiting the specific sphere of *kleos*, the distinction ceases to be relevant when one wishes to establish what is generally seen by Homer as worth preservation in poetry: actually, it only emphasizes the fact that glorious deeds are no more than a particular case of what was seen as worth such preservation.

⁹ Jaeger 1947, 36, cf. also 40–41.

Odyssey 24.194–202 is the only Homeric passage regarding which the educational theory can be considered relevant.¹⁰

Another approach was proposed by Hermann Fränkel. Fränkel noticed that what is expected to be preserved in song is designated both by Helen in the *Iliad* and by Alcinous in the *Odyssey* as 'evil fate', 'doom', and 'ruin', and that these and similar characteristics are often applied by Homer to major epic subjects such as the Trojan War or the Return of the Achaeans.¹¹ Proceeding from this observation, he came to the conclusion that 'what the Homeric singer aimed at was to arouse feelings of fear and pity through imagined participation in tragic events' and that, therefore, 'only what is sorrowful is worth preservation in song'.¹² Accounting as it does for the morally neutral as well as for the praiseworthy and reprehensible deeds, the approach that derives song from human suffering fits in better with the complex and many-faceted character of Homer's poetry than the 'monument' and educational theories, reminding us that 'in the Homeric poems glory is not a simple and straightforward thing, won by heroic deeds' and that 'we are far from the unreflective heroism of the Germanic lays'.¹³ Here too, however, the question is whether the approach is comprehensive.

In *Iliad* 2, Odysseus reminds the rest of the Achaeans of the great portent which they witnessed at Aulis, at the very beginning of the Trojan expedition, and adduces the words said on the occasion by Calchas the soothsayer:

'Zeus of the counsels has shown us this great portent: a thing late, late to be accomplished, whose *kleos* shall perish never (ὄψιμον ὀψιτέλεστον, ὅου κλέος οὔποτε ὀλεῖται). As this snake has eaten the sparrow herself with her children, eight of them, and the mother was the ninth, who bore them, so for years as many as this shall we fight in this place and in the tenth year we shall take the city of the wide ways'.

(*Il.* 2.324–29)

It can be seen that the statement that the portent's fame will never be lost accords with none of the principles purporting to account for Homer's idea of what is worth preservation in song. The portent at Aulis was not the act of a hero aiming at everlasting glory in posterity; it can serve neither as an authoritative example nor as a warning; nor can it be envisaged as an embodiment of human suffering. It is simply an event. Still, it is obviously regarded by Homer as worthy of the

¹⁰ So Kraus 1955, 70, and Lanata 1963, 15, but see Verdenius 1983, 34, who draws attention also to other cases in Homer where 'the glorification of the past has an educational by-purpose'.

¹¹ Fränkel 1962, 14–15.

¹² Fränkel 1962, 15. See also Macleod 1982, 1–8 and 1983, 11–12.

¹³ Griffin 1980, 96. On Homer's idea of heroism as compared to other heroic traditions see also Renehan 1987; on the comparison between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* see below, ch. 20.

same everlasting fame as the glorious deeds and tragic fates of the most prominent of his heroes.

Shall we infer from this that what Homer saw as worth preservation in song was merely what has happened? Obviously, such a principle would be a comprehensive one we are looking for. But if the totality of epic songs amounted to the totality of the events that had happened, that is, if the epic corpus was regarded, as A.W. Gomme put it, as 'chronicles',¹⁴ the entire issue of Achilles' choice would make no sense at all. Indeed, if what is preserved for posterity is simply what happened, Achilles' returning home would be even more an 'event' than his remaining at Troy; still, in that case his fame would not have been preserved. Achilles' case plainly indicates that Homer did have a principle in mind determining which events of the past should be preserved for posterity.¹⁵

2

Thus far, in our attempts to arrive at a comprehensive definition of the subjects which Homer says are worth preserving for posterity, we have only obtained negative results. Indeed, the only thing which can be said with certainty at this stage is that neither heroic deeds nor moral examples nor human suffering nor, finally, chronological documentation of past events can supply a basis for generalization. In view of this, perhaps the simplest way to arrive at the common denominator we are looking for is to assemble all the relevant instances and try to assess what they have in common. Apart from the subjects which Homer explicitly says will be preserved by poetry, I will deal only with those whose future preservation is presented in terms of longevity beyond the reach of firsthand evidence (see above, p. 128). The discussion is confined to the expressions καὶ ἔσσομένοισιν ἀοιδῇ ('song for men yet unborn') and the like (*Il.* 6.357–58; *Od.* 3.204, 8.580, 24.194–202), καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι ('even men yet to be born will hear [of it]') and the like (see nn. 5 and 6 above), κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται ('the *kleos* will never perish') (*Il.* 2.325; *Od.* 24.196; cf. *Il.* 7.91), ἄσβεστον κλέος εἶη ('the *kleos* should be

¹⁴ Gomme 1951, 2–3.

¹⁵ I think it plausible that Achilles' account of his alternative fates is an innovation: in the rest of the *Iliad* it is taken for granted that Achilles is doomed to die young, see Willcock 1977, 48–49. Innovative, however, still does not mean untraditional nor, moreover, anti-traditional and, as M.W. Edwards 1987a, 224 reminds us, the idea is not unparalleled. Note also that the whole idea is actually enshrined in the Homeric formula κλέος οὐποτ' ὀλεῖται (the *kleos* will never perish'), which is phrased in such a way as to admit of two options for the preservation of one's fame, namely, that it can be either lost or not. On this and related expressions see chs. 1 and 7.

inextinguishable') (7.331, cf. 4.584), and the expressions employing the term ὀψίγονος ('one yet to be born') in the sense relevant to our subject (*Il.* 3.353, 16.31; *Od.* 1.392, 3.200). My criteria rule out such passages as, for example *Iliad* 8.181, Hector's remark that there should be a memory (μνημοσύνη) of his setting fire to the ships of the Achaeans: this case is taken as relevant to poetry by Nagy,¹⁶ but note that Phoenix's reminiscence of Meleager's wrath is rendered in the same terms (see his μέμνημαι at *Il.* 9.527). Another such case is *Iliad* 10.212, Nestor's statement that he who volunteers to penetrate into the Trojan camp will get the 'heaven-high' fame (ὑπουράνιον κλέος): when *kleos* is described by Homer in such spatial terms, it usually means widespread reputation in the present.¹⁷ I do not intend to say that such passages are necessarily irrelevant to poetry, but since it is impossible to prove the opposite it seems wise to exclude them from consideration.

Here is the full list of subjects marked by Homer as deserving to be preserved: (1) Helen and Paris; (2) Departure from Aulis; (3) Death of Hector; (4) Doom of the Achaeans and Troy; (5) Odysseus in the Land of the Phaeacians; (6) Penelope's Virtue; (7) The Slaughter of the Suitors; (8) Clytaemnestra's Perfidy; (9) Orestes' Revenge; (10) Retreat of the Achaeans from Troy (unaccomplished); (11) Paris' Death at Menelaus' hands (unaccomplished); (12) Achilles' Remaining at Troy (an alternative). We can see that most of them correspond to the main components of the Trojan saga, from the Cyclic *Cypria* via the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, to the Cyclic *Nostoi*. If all the subjects referred to by Homer as deserving preservation had been like these, we would have faced a real *aporia*: insofar as the subjects which are treated as worth preservation for posterity are the very ones that have actually been preserved, there could be no way to define the principle according to which these subjects were selected.

Fortunately, however, among the subjects regarded as deserving perpetuation Homer occasionally refers to hypothetical situations, that is, events that could have happened but eventually did not. A good example of such a hypothetical situation is the episode of the Diapēira in *Iliad* 2. Agamemnon intends to test his men by proposing to return home without taking Troy. Contrary to his expectations, the Achaeans rush to the ships, eager to depart immediately. While trying to stop them, Agamemnon says, *inter alia*, that the shame of their retreat will be known even to men yet unborn (v.119: καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πιθέσθαι). It is significant to emphasize that, although the *Iliad* often refers to shameful behaviour in war,

¹⁶ Nagy 1979, 17.

¹⁷ Cf. *Il.* 8.192 τῆς νῦν κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει (of Nestor's shield), or *Od.* 8.74 τοῦ δὲ νῦν γε μέγιστον ὑπουράνιον κλέος ἐστίν (of Demodocus' song). See also above, chs. 1 and 7.

it is only in this instance that such shame is expected to be perpetuated. What makes this case different? To obtain the answer, we should take into account what would have happened had the Achaeans indeed left Troy in the tenth year of the war. Obviously, this premature withdrawal, had it been carried out, would have brought the Trojan War to an end: 'Then the Argives would have made a homecoming beyond what was ordained (ὑπέρμora), if Hera had not spoken to Athena', etc.¹⁸ Now, if a retreat that does not bring about a dramatic tum in the course of events is not considered worth preservation in posterity, whereas the retreat that does, or would, cause such a dramatic tum is so considered, we should infer that only events possessing far-reaching consequences were seen by Homer as deserving to become subjects of epic songs and thus to be immortalized.

Thus, with the assistance of a hypothetical situation relating to an event that never actually took place, we can distinguish between the canonized nomenclature of the episodes constituting the Trojan saga and the poet's ideas that lie beyond this nomenclature; for, as a matter of fact, if we apply the conclusions obtained as a result of our analysis of a hypothetical situation to the other situations regarded as worth preservation, we shall see that the conclusion holds good in the non-hypothetical cases as well.

Let us begin with the *Iliad*. In Book 2, the portent at Aulis, whose fame 'shall never perish', is said to be 'late-come' (ὄψιμον) and 'of late fulfilment' (ὀψιτέλεστον) (see above). It can be seen that these characteristics are also relevant to the Aulis episode as a whole: inasmuch as the Achaeans' departure for Troy will virtually be fulfilled only with the end of the ten-year war, this event itself is also 'of late fulfilment'. In view of this, it seems reasonable to suggest, together with the scholiast, that the statement that its *kleos* 'shall never perish' refers not only to the portent itself but also to the events for which it stands.¹⁹ Furthermore, considering that no other portent in Homer is said to be destined to be remembered forever, it seems reasonable to suggest that it is not the portent's mere occurrence, but its occurrence simultaneously with so significant an event as the beginning of the Trojan War, that guarantees, in Homer's eyes, that the fame of this particular portent will be preserved in posterity.

In *Iliad* 3, Menelaus says that if Paris is defeated by him, this will prevent men in the future from repeating his crime.²⁰ Again, had the Menelaus-Paris single

18 *Il.* 2.155–56, transl. M. Hammond, slightly changed.

19 Schol. bT on *Il.* 2.325: τὸ τοῦ πολέμου κλέος ἢ τὸ τοῦ σημείου. Cf. also Maehler 1963, 11: 'Der Ruhm gilt nicht so sehr dem Zeichen als vielmehr dem Geschehen'.

20 *Il.* 3.353–54 ὄφρα τις ἐρρίγησι καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων / ξεινοδόκον κακὰ ῥέξαι.

combat, which by agreement was to determine the outcome of the war, reached a decisive conclusion, the Trojan War would have ended; like the retreat of the Achaeans, this combat too, represents an 'historical option' which failed to materialize.²¹ In view of this, it may reasonably be suggested that what was to make Paris' punishment by Menelaus so memorable was, above all, its association with so significant a prospect as the end of the Trojan War.

In *Iliad* 22, having realized the inevitability of his death at Achilles' hands, Hector intends to accomplish 'something great (μέγα ... τι) whereof men yet to be born shall hear'.²² With these words he attacks Achilles with his sword, but Achilles strikes him first with his spear. This can hardly be seen as the greatest of Hector's feats. But Hector's death was indeed one of the great events of the Trojan War. Hence, even if his behaviour at such a moment had been shameful, it is very likely that posterity would still have heard about his fatal combat with Achilles. Hector's behaviour at the moment of his death could only determine how, not whether, he should enter into the memory of posterity.

The most illuminating case, however, is Helen. 'Us two', Helen says of Paris and herself in *Iliad* 6, 'on whom Zeus set a bitter destiny, so that hereafter we shall be made into things of song for the men of the future'.²³ It seems unlikely to me that Helen's (and Homer's) confidence about the perpetuation of Helen's story issued, as is argued by some, from the tragic character of her fate. After all, Helen's fate can hardly be considered more tragic than, say, that of Andromache. Nevertheless as the latter ponders what will happen to her after Hector's death and the fall of Troy, Andromache envisages no prospect that her suffering will make her famous in posterity.²⁴ Rather, it is her being the cause of the Trojan War that guarantees that Helen's personal fate should supply a subject for future songs.

Thus all the cases of the preservation of a given subject in posterity mentioned in the *Iliad* (apart from that of Achilles, which will be discussed separately) seem to be closely associated with crucial stages in the history of the Trojan War. Helen as a person stands for the very reason of the war; the Aulis episode signals its actual beginning just as Hector's death stands for its logical end, so to speak;

²¹ Such introduction of unrealized options (termed by Karl Reinhardt 'das "Fast"' and by Bernard Fenik 'the "almost" situation') is characteristic of Homer's technique of plot-making. See Reinhardt 1961, 107–20; Fenik 1978, 80–81 and above, ch. 12, 124.

²² *Il.* 22.304–305.

²³ *Il.* 6.357–58 οἷσιν ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόρον, ὥς καὶ ὀπίσσω / ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' αἰοιδίμοι ἐσσομένοισι.

²⁴ *Il.* 24.725–45, cf. also 22.477–507 and 6.447–65. Insofar as Andromache's fate was a matter of interest, this was due to the fact of her being Hector's spouse rather than to her suffering.

finally, the Achaeans' intention to abandon Troy and the Menelaus–Paris duel represent, each in its own way, unrealized options for the war's solution.

Let us turn now to the *Odyssey*. It may seem that, as distinct from the *Iliad*, the setting of this poem hardly lends itself to any kind of 'historical' explanation. Clytaemnestra's perfidy, Orestes' revenge, Alcinous' hospitality, the loyalty of Penelope—all referred to as worth preservation in posterity—seem to fall short of the standards of historical significance set in the *Iliad*. We can hardly expect, however, that Homer's criteria of historical significance would be identical to ours: it is sufficient for our purpose that the aftermath of the Trojan War, the Returns, was obviously seen in Greek tradition as no less integral part of the Trojan saga than the events of the war itself (cf. ch. 17, 178–79). If we take this into account, we shall see that in the *Odyssey* too, everything expected to be preserved in posterity is inseparable from great events, which in that poem are significant developments in the homeland at the time of the heroes' return.

Thus, just as Clytaemnestra's perfidy, crowned as it was with Agamemnon's murder, cannot be separated from the palace revolution and dethronement of the ruling dynasty of Argos, so also Orestes' virtue is an integral part of the restoration.²⁵ Penelope's loyalty too, representing as it does the necessary condition for the restoration of Odysseus' rule over Ithaca,²⁶ is a factor 'of late fulfilment' in the poem's plot rather than simply a demonstration of didactic virtue.

The same is true of the Suitors. Their behaviour is characterized as blameworthy throughout the poem; yet, it is only in *Odyssey* 21, in the bow episode, that the Suitors' disrepute is expected to be preserved in posterity.²⁷ Now the bow episode, referred to as 'the beginning of the slaughter' (φόνου ἀρχήν) already in the opening lines of the book (v. 4), introduces the slaughter of the Suitors by Odysseus and is thus inseparable from the restoration of the latter's reign in Ithaca: that is to say, a great event catches the Suitors at the moment of their inability to draw Odysseus' bow, and it is together with this disgrace that they are to enter into the memory of posterity.²⁸

²⁵ *Od.* 3.204, 24.194–202, cf. also 1.302, 3.200, 11.432–34.

²⁶ Inasmuch as marrying Odysseus' widow is seen in the poem as legitimizing accession to the kingship of Ithaca; see Finley 1978, 97–99 and below, ch. 19, 204–205.

²⁷ *Od.* 21.255 ἐλεγχεῖν δὲ καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.

²⁸ This would also be true of the unaccomplished revenge of the Suitors' kinsmen, the shame of which is referred to at *Od.* 24.433 as expected to become known to posterity. Odysseus' restoration of his rule directly depends on whether or not this revenge will be successful (cf. Finley 1978, 83–84), so that its preservation, whether in the form of honour or that of shame, is guaranteed.

Two other cases concern Odysseus' sojourn with the Phaeacians. In *Odyssey* 7, Odysseus says that if Alcinous' promise to give him an escort is fulfilled, Alcinous' fame will be imperishable, while he himself will return home.²⁹ This is one of the clearest examples of how the participation in a significant event can guarantee preservation in posterity. Indeed, the syntax makes it perfectly clear that Alcinous' fame and Odysseus' return reciprocate each other: 'he on the one hand ... I on the other hand ...'. Alcinous and his Phaeacians certainly do not owe their existence to the Homeric *Odyssey*; yet their 'inextinguishable fame' is due to their assistance in the return of the great Odysseus and to the poem immortalizing this event.³⁰ And finally, at *Odyssey* 8.579–80 Alcinous says that the doom and ruin of the Achaeans and Troy have been fashioned by the gods 'that there might be a song in the ears of men yet unborn'. Alcinous remark, to which we shall return, is especially important in that it shows that according to Homer, all the participants of the Trojan War, and not only its protagonists, would receive a share in the future song.

Thus, just as in the *Iliad*, the subjects in the *Odyssey* which are expected to be preserved in posterity cannot be separated from significant events. Above all, it is two such events, Agamemnon's return to Argos and Odysseus' return to Ithaca, that the *Odyssey* poet had in mind.

3

We have now examined all the subjects about which it is explicitly said in Homer that they are to be preserved in posterity. In every case, association of such subjects with events of great significance in the Trojan saga has been established. The question now is whether such a pattern is in itself sufficient to justify the inference that the participation in a significant event is, according to Homer, the sole guarantee of a given subject's preservation in posterity. To argue that this is so, we must have proof that in Homer's eyes all these subjects would otherwise have perished. It seems to me that the case of Achilles' choice provides such a demonstration.

²⁹ *Od.* 7.332–33 τοῦ μὲν κεν ἐπὶ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν / ἄσβεστον κλέος εἶη, ἐγὼ δέ κε πατρίδ' ἰκοίμην.

³⁰ Cf. Diod. Sic. 4.72.4: 'To Phaeax was born Alcinous, who brought about the return of Odysseus to Ithaca' (transl. C.H. Oldfather). The only other case when one's *kleos* is expected to be 'inextinguishable' (ἄσβεστον) is the *kleos* of Agamemnon, which is to be preserved by his tomb, see *Od.* 4.584 and n. 36 below.

By all standards, Achilles was the greatest of the Achaean heroes of the generation of the Trojan War. Still, as reported in *Iliad* 9, had he left Troy and returned home, his fame would have been lost. Again, like the unaccomplished retreat of the Achaeans, this is an option that was ultimately not taken, but this time the alternative is not the preservation but the deletion of one's fame from the memory of posterity. Let us, then, imagine again what would have happened had Achilles indeed left the Trojan campaign in the tenth year of the war. The most obvious answer is that he would not have killed Hector and, consequently, would not have influenced the war's course in the way he actually did. Now an Achilles who did not kill Hector may be compared to a Helen who did not elope with Paris. It is doubtful indeed whether Helen's position as queen of Sparta and the most beautiful of the Achaean women would have sufficed to give her more prominent representation in poetry than something like 'she surpassed all the girls of her own age for beauty and accomplishments and wit'.³¹ That the same could have been true of Achilles can be inferred from Patroclus' words to Achilles in *Iliad* 16: 'What other men born hereafter shall be advantaged unless you beat aside from the Argives this shameful destruction?'³² Patroclus' words clearly imply that, by abstaining from participation in the war, Achilles will lose his *raison d'être* from the point of view of others, including future generations.

Note that, while the preservation of the memory of every individual subject is directly conditioned by its role in the Trojan War, no such justification is ever applied to the war itself. As far as Homer is concerned, the everlasting glory of the Trojan events is axiomatic.³³ In the *Odyssey*, where the war as such is already viewed as part of the heroic past, the 'Doom of the Achaeans and Troy' engages everybody's attention, including that of the gods themselves. The inhabitants of Ithaca, of Scheria, of the Island of Aeolia are eager to listen to songs and stories about Troy (which, in fact, are the only songs and stories they listen to), and this is the very subject that is included in the Sirens' promise of bestowing a

31 *Il.* 13.431–32, of Anchises' daughter Hippodameia when her husband is killed by Idomeneus.

32 *Il.* 16.31–32 τί σευ ἄλλος ὀνήσεται ὀψιγόνος περ / αἶ κε μὴ Ἀργείοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμύνη; Transl. R. Lattimore. Ebeling, s.v. ὀψιγόνος, proposes *quid juvabis posteros?* as an equivalent to this rather puzzling remark; the rendering given is LSJ, s.v. ὀνίνημι is 'what good will others have of thee?, i.e., what good will you have done them?' Cf. Erbse 1983, 13. See also below, ch. 22, 261–63.

33 The justification of the historical significance of the Trojan War can be found in the Cyclic *Cypria* and the Hesiodic corpus: the Trojan and Theban wars were the two events that ended the Heroic Age; both were designed by Zeus in order to destroy the Race of Heroes, see *Cypria* fr. 1, Hes. *Op.* 156–5 and fr. 204.95–119 M-W. This explains why the subject of the Returns was envisaged as no less significant than the Trojan War as such. See also below, chs. 15 and 17.

knowledge greater than the human—a promise no one can resist.³⁴ That only a savage like Polyphemus can remain ignorant of the Trojan War—as well as of any other mark of human civilization—shows clearly enough that acquaintance with the Trojan saga was regarded as one of the cultural codes that united the civilized world.³⁵ And the crowning demonstration of the supreme significance of the Trojan saga is found, of course, in the avowal of both Helen in the *Iliad* and Alcinous in the *Odyssey* that the evil fate of all those involved in the war was ultimately imposed by the gods only to supply song for future generations (above). That is to say, for Homer, as also for generations of Greeks after him, the history of the Trojan War amounted to the history of the past as such.

At *Odyssey* 8.579–90, Homer has Alcinous say that the doom and ruin of the Achaeans and Troy were fashioned by the gods in order to provide song for posterity. One can infer from these words that it was Homer's contention that everyone who was involved in the war would receive his or her share in the song. This is not to say, however, that every participant would be treated equally. There is indeed a great difference between those who remained hardly more than names in the catalogues and those few protagonists who exerted decisive influence on the course of the war. After all, 'song', promised to all, is a far weaker term than the 'everlasting fame' individually promised to Achilles. Consider that the conception of our *Iliad* is based on the presumption that the death of Hector would amount to the fall of Troy. The *Iliad* thus placed Achilles at a strategic position within the Trojan saga: as long as Hector lived Troy would not fall, and it was Achilles who killed Hector. But Troy was destined to fall. This means that if Achilles had not been there Hector would have had to be killed by someone else.

Compare the case of Philoctetes, who did not even participate in the ten-year campaign, but whose place in the history of the Trojan War was guaranteed by the simple fact that, without his joining the Achaeans at the last moment, Troy would not have fallen (in that he kills Paris, Philoctetes seems to play the central part in the Cyclic *Little Iliad*). Note now that the Trojan saga abounds in heroes without whose participation Troy would not have fallen. It would not have fallen without Achilles, who killed Hector; without Philoctetes, who killed Paris; without the participation of Neoptolemus, who, like Philoctetes, arrived towards the end of the war; without Odysseus and Diomedes, who stole the Palladium; and, above all, without the Wooden Horse, which was devised by Odysseus and was conveniently made big enough to harbour all the leading characters in the Trojan saga.

³⁴ *Od.* 12.189–90. See further Finkelberg 1998, 95–98.

³⁵ *Od.* 9.258–80.

Had Achilles returned home, the history of the Trojan War would have been remembered differently, this time without Achilles as its key figure. It can be assumed that, living peacefully in Phthia, Achilles still would not have been lost to the rumour of his contemporaries, and his fame would not have been lost also in the sense that it would have been preserved by his tomb. But this is also true of such a minor character as Odysseus' companion Elpenor.³⁶ It can also be assumed that Achilles' military record up to the moment of his departure would have sufficed to guarantee him some minor part in the poetic account of the Trojan saga, and his name, like the names of other minor warriors, would certainly have emerged in battle scenes and catalogues. But he would not have obtained imperishable fame, that is, there would have been no song about Achilles. If I am correct, the reason for this would be that, had Achilles left Troy, he would have missed his chance to become a significant figure in Greek collective memory.

There can be little doubt that the Homeric epics originated in heroic lays whose main objective was to praise military exploits of Greek chieftains; however, not only in their structure and ethos but also, as I hope to have shown, in their purpose, they are far removed from songs of military prowess which properly belong to a much earlier stage in epic tradition. To treat them on the same plane would do little justice to either form of heroic poetry. This is not to say, of course, that military exploits were of no interest to the poet. Yet acts of heroism, tragic fates and praiseworthy or reprehensible deeds were regarded by him as having been preserved in song not in their own right but by virtue of their being part of events that determined the course of history. Without fulfilling this condition, like Achilles' fame, they would have been lost to posterity.³⁷

³⁶ See *Od.* 11.75–76, cf. 10.552–53. Apart from song, the hero's tomb is the only other means of perpetuating his fame, see, e.g., *Il.* 7.84–91; *Od.* 4.584, 11.75–76, 24.80–94.

³⁷ An earlier version of this paper was read in May 1989 at the Annual Meeting of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies held at Tel Aviv University. I am grateful to all who were present on this occasion for their comments and discussion.

14 The Sources of *Iliad* 7

1

At the beginning of *Iliad* 7, in a speech addressed to both the Trojans and the Achaeans, Hector challenges an Achaean champion to a single combat. He proposes the terms of the duel: if he himself is slain by the Achaean, the victor will take the armour but will give the body back to the Trojans; if the Achaean perishes, Hector in his turn will take the armour as spoil. As to the body:

τὸν δὲ νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆας ἐϋσέλμους ἀποδώσω,
ὄφρα ἔ ταρχύσωσι κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί,
σῆμά τέ οἱ χεύωσιν ἐπὶ πλατεί Ἑλλησπόντῳ.
καί ποτέ τις εἴπῃσι καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων
νῆϊ πολυκλήϊδι πλέων ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον·
ἀνδρὸς μὲν τόδε σῆμα πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος,
ὃν ποτ' ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτανε φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ.
ὥς ποτέ τις ἔρέει· τὸ δ' ἐμὸν κλέος οὐ ποτ' ὀλεῖται.

'But his body I shall return to the well-benched vessels, so that the long-haired Achaeans can give him the rites of burial and heap a mound for him by the broad Hellespont. And people will say, even men of generations not yet born, as they sail by over the sparkling sea in their many-benched ships: "This is the mound of a man who died long ago. He was one of the best, and glorious Hector killed him". That is what they will say: and my fame will never die'.¹

Nine Achaean heroes volunteer to meet Hector on the battlefield. They draw lots, and Ajax son of Telamon is selected. The duel that follows comes to no definite conclusion. Nobody is killed, and Hector's vision of an Achaean tomb over the Hellespont remains unfulfilled. At the same time, Homer's description of this tomb is so vivid that it is small wonder that attempts have been made to identify it with a real monument of the Trojan War. Thus, P. von der Mühl suggested that the Homeric lines were inspired by the Aianteion, 'the tomb of Ajax' near Rheoteum on the Hellespontine shore of the Troad, whereas G.S. Kirk proposed Beşik Tepe on the Aegean shore, identified by some scholars as 'the tomb of Achilles'.² However, the Aianteion theory is implausible simply because Ajax did not fall by

¹ *Il.* 7.84–91; transl. M. Hammond, with slight changes.

² Von der Mühl 1952, 132–33, cf. van Thiel 1982, 254; Kirk 1990, 245. See further Cook 1973, 86–87, 178–88.

Hector's hand, so that his tomb could hardly be envisaged by Homer as contributing to Hector's glory, whereas the main difficulty of Kirk's identification is that Beşik Tepe is not situated 'by the broad Hellespont'. This difficulty was seen by Kirk himself, so that he suggested that 'there may, of course, have been other early tumuli that have not survived, even perhaps along the strictly Hellespontine shore'.³

The Hellespont, however, is not confined to the Troad alone, and the fact is that as soon as we look across the straits we shall be able to find a tomb which would closely correspond to the Homeric description. I mean the famous *herōon* of Protesilaus at Elaeus in the Thracian Chersonese on the European side of the straits. Elaeus, an Athenian foundation, dominated the southern entrance into the Hellespont, and Protesilaus' shrine, situated in its precincts (actually, a pre-historic tomb contemporary with Troy I), undoubtedly was the most important Hellespontine landmark during the whole of antiquity. Thucydides' description of how an Athenian ship which tried to escape the Peloponnesian fleet was wrecked under the temple of Protesilaus clearly indicates that this temple was located so as to overlook the straits, and the same conclusion follows from the fact that Strabo treats it as part of a *periplous*.⁴ Herodotus testifies to its wealth: 'For at this place [Elaeus] is the tomb of Protesilaus, surrounded by a sacred precinct; and here there was great store of wealth, vases of gold and silver, works in brass, garments, and other offerings'; the plundering and desecration of the tomb by the Persians and the subsequent vengeance of the divine hero are well known from Herodotus' *History*.⁵ The *herōon* of Protesilaus was widely known and venerated throughout antiquity: Alexander the Great offered sacrifices to it on crossing to Asia; in the late antiquity, Protesilaus was already worshipped as a god, and the temple, famous for its oracle and the miracles that took place in its precincts, was reckoned as one of the most important of its kind in the entire Greek world.⁶

Although in the Homeric Catalogue of Ships Protesilaus, the first Achaean to lose his life at Troy, is said to have been killed by an unidentified Δάρδανος ἄνθρωπος, the Cyclic *Cypria*, where the episode was related in full, explicitly mentioned Hector as responsible for Protesilaus' death. It is the *Cypria* version that became pre-dominant in the later tradition.⁷ Note indeed that, although there was more than

³ Kirk 1990, 245.

⁴ Thuc. 8.102; Strab. 7.51 (52), cf. 7.55 (56).

⁵ Hdt. 9.116; transl. G. Rawlinson. Cf. Hdt. 9.120; 7.33.

⁶ Arr. *Anab.* 11; Paus. 1.34.2; 3.4.6; Philostr. *Heroica* 3.1.

⁷ *Il.* 2.701; Allen 1912, 105.1 [= *Cypr.* arg. 10 West]. See further below, ch. 26, 315–16.

one version of the name of Protesilaus' slayer (Hector, Aeneas, Achates, and Euphorbus are among those mentioned), Hector is named not only by Proclus but also by Apollodorus, in Scholia on Lycophron, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and, by implication, in the *Heroides*.⁸ The fact that Demetrius of Scepsis in his emendation of *Iliad* 2.701 replaced τὸν δ' ἔκτανε Δάρδανος ἄνθρωπος of the transmitted text with τὸν δ' ἔκτανε φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ proves conclusively that the tradition of Protesilaus having been slain by Hector was the dominant one.

The tomb of Protesilaus matches all the essentials of the Homeric description: it is a tomb of an Achaean hero slain by Hector; it could be seen by those who sailed through the Hellespont, and it was famous enough to bestow everlasting glory on the person responsible for this hero's death.⁹ All but one: at the moment of Hector's speech Protesilaus had been dead and buried for almost ten years, and Homer is well aware of this fact.¹⁰ Accordingly, Hector's imagining the tomb of a man killed ten years earlier as belonging to the future appears contradictory. The fact however is that, incongruous as it may seem from the general standpoint of the *Iliad*, the identification of the tomb by the Hellespont with Protesilaus' *herōon* fits in well with the context of *Iliad* 7.

2

The general plan of *Iliad* 7 can be outlined as follows. On Hector's return from his visit to Troy (Book 6), Athena and Apollo plan a single combat between Hector and an Achaean champion; this plan becomes known to Helenus the soothsayer, and he communicates it to Hector. Hector's challenge and the unresolved duel with Ajax come next. During the subsequent feast Nestor suggests a truce in the course of which the Greeks would be able to bury their dead and fortify the camp. Simultaneously, the Trojans discuss Antenor's suggestion to restore Helen to the Greeks, as well as Menelaus' possessions that Paris had taken off with her; Paris agrees to give back the possessions but he is not ready to part with Helen. His terms are adopted by the Trojans and communicated to the Greeks; in addition,

⁸ Apollod. *Epit.* 3.30; schol. on Lycophr. 245; Ov. *Met.* 12.67–68; *Her.* 13.65–66 (Laodamia to Protesilaus). Cf. Eust. on *Il.* 2.701 and *Od.* 11.521 and ch. 26 below.

⁹ Note Homer's use of the verb ταρχύειν in connection with the funeral of Hector's antagonist (v. 85). This is a rare word whose only other occurrence is *Il.* 16.456 = 674, where it appears in connection with the death of Sarpedon and seems to imply heroic honours which were paid to the deceased, see Chantraine 1968, s.v. ταρχύω and Schein 1984, 48. This being so, it would be reasonable to suggest that the tomb described by Hector was supposed to involve hero-cult.

¹⁰ See *Il.* 2.698–99; 15.705–706.

the Trojan messenger proposes a truce for the sake of burial. The Achaeans reject the Trojan terms concerning Helen and the possessions but welcome the truce. Both sides gather up their dead and bury them; after this, the Achaeans build a wall and a trench before their camp. This is followed by Zeus' promise to Poseidon that the wall will be destroyed after the Achaeans' departure from the Troad, and by the night-feast in the Achaean camp.

The fortification of the camp in the tenth year of the war is surprising, to say the least: it would have been much more natural if the fortifications had been built at the very beginning of the campaign. The same holds good of the negotiations concerning the return of Helen and the possessions. It is no wonder, therefore, that older scholars often regarded the second part of *Iliad* 7, which treats these events, as an interpolation modelled upon an earlier poem which dealt with the beginning of the Trojan War.¹¹

The beginning of the Trojan War was the subject of the Cyclic *Cypria*. According to Proclus' summary of this poem, the sequence of the relevant events was as follows:

Then the Greeks tried to land at Ilium, but the Trojans prevent them, and Protesilaus is killed by Hector. Achilles then kills Cycnus, the son of Poseidon, and drives the Trojans back. *The Greeks take up their dead* (καὶ τοὺς νεκροὺς ἀναίρουσιν) and send envoys to the Trojans demanding the surrender of Helen and the treasure with her. The Trojans refusing, they first assault the city etc.¹²

Three episodes can be discerned in this account: (1) the death of Protesilaus; (2) Achilles' victory over Cycnus and the subsequent burial of the dead; (3) negotiations with the Trojans concerning the restoration of Helen and the possessions. Neither the forming of the camp nor the building of the fortifications nor even the landing itself are mentioned by Proclus, but it is reasonable to suppose that the burial of the dead which followed the Achaean victory implied at least the latter.

Our only source in which the forming of the camp constitutes part of the narrative sequence suggested by the *Cypria* is Herodotus:

After the rape of Helen, a vast army of Greeks, wishing to render help to Menelaus, set sail for the Teucrian territory; on their arrival they disembarked, *and formed their camp* (καὶ

¹¹ See, e.g., Bethe 1914, 120–43; Wilamowitz 1916, 50–59, 313–15; Bolling 1925, 91–100; von der Mühl 1952, 129–43.

¹² Allen 1912, 104.24–105.6 [= *Cypr.* arg. 10 West]; transl. H.G. Evelyn-White.

ἰδρυθεῖσαν τὴν στρατιὴν κτλ.), after which they sent ambassadors to Ilium, of whom Menelaus was one. The embassy was received within the walls, and demanded the restoration of Helen with the treasures which Alexander had carried off...¹³

Both the general context of Herodotus' discussion and the order of the episodes strongly suggest that his description of the Greek arrival ultimately goes back to a *Cypria*.¹⁴ It can be suggested, therefore, that the forming of the camp, with or without fortifications, omitted though it was in Proclus' account, was nevertheless described in his source as part of the landing.

It is against this background that the following much discussed passage from Thucydides should be read:

After their arrival at Troy, when they had won a battle (as they clearly did, *for otherwise they could not have fortified their camp*) (τὸ γὰρ ἔργον τῷ στρατοπέδῳ οὐκ ἂν τειχίσαντο)...¹⁵

Since the passage emerges in the context of the discussion of the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, it has been suggested that the text of the *Iliad* used by Thucydides was different from ours, which places the fortification of the camp in the tenth year of the war.¹⁶ An alternative suggestion, namely, that Thucydides' source for this specific passage was the Cyclic *Cypria*, is rendered implausible by the fact that the fortification of the camp is taken by Thucydides as conclusive proof that the Greeks won a battle on their arrival: since this can only mean that no such victory was explicitly found in Thucydides' source and since at least the *Cypria* used by Proclus clearly described one ('Achilles then kills Cynus, the son of Poseidon, and drives the Trojans back'), it is unlikely that Thucydides' account descends directly from the *Cypria*.¹⁷

Accordingly, we have to conjecture a source in which the landing of the Greeks is immediately followed by the forming of the camp and the building of

¹³ Hdt. 2.118; transl. G. Rawlinson.

¹⁴ Cf. Bolling 1925, 93.

¹⁵ Thuc. 1.11; transl. B. Jowett.

¹⁶ See Bolling 1925, 92–93; Page 1959, 315–22. *Contra* M. West 1969; Hornblower 1991, 36.

¹⁷ See Page 1959, 317–18. Cf. Gomme 1945, 115: '... the picture of the Trojan war which Thucydides has in mind is as follows: the Greeks won the first battle on land (this was not expressly told in the epic, but it must be inferred; for otherwise they would have had no fortified στρατόπεδον, and could not have carried on the war at all: hence it cannot be, as the scholiast thinks, the battle in which Protesilaus fell; Thucydides is only *inferring* the victory)...' (Gomme's emphasis) Cf. also M. West 1969, 256–57.

the fortifications, with no Greek victory in battle between.¹⁸ As far as I can see, Herodotus 2.118 as adduced above ('on their arrival they disembarked, and formed their camp') is just such a source. Although Herodotus does not mention the fortification of the camp as such, it is reasonable to suppose that, being after all the normal Greek practice after a landing,¹⁹ the building of the fortifications was seen as inseparable from the forming of the camp and therefore taken for granted by Thucydides. It can be suggested, therefore, that what Thucydides had in mind was neither a different *Iliad* nor a version of the *Cypria* but Herodotus' *History*, and that his parenthetic 'as they clearly did, for otherwise they could not have fortified their camp' was polemical in respect of this source.²⁰ Since, as we saw, Herodotus 2.118 most probably goes back to a *Cypria*, we have to conclude that Thucydides' account has no independent value.

The same cannot be said, however, of the account of the same events found in Apollodorus' *Library*:

Putting to sea from Tenedos, they approached Troy, and sent Odysseus and Menelaus to demand the restoration of Helen and the property. But the Trojans, having summoned the assembly, not only refused to restore Helen, but threatened to kill the envoys. These were, however, saved by Antenor; but the Greeks, exasperated at the insolence of the barbarians, stood to arms and made sail against them. ... Of the Greeks the first to land from his ship was Protesilaus, and having slain not a few of the barbarians, he fell by the hand of Hector. ... On the death of Protesilaus, Achilles landed with the Myrmidons, and throwing a stone at the head of Cynus, killed him. When the barbarians saw him dead, they fled to the city, and the Greeks, leaping from their ships, filled the plain with bodies. And having shut up the Trojans, they besieged them; *and they drew up the ships* (ἀνέλκουσι δὲ τὰς ναῦς).²¹

Comparison of Apollodorus' account with that of Proclus shows that although the episodes adduced by the two are the same, the order in which they emerge is different: in Apollodorus, the embassy precedes the landing and not, as in Proclus, follows it. This seems to indicate that the Proclus version of the *Cypria* was not the only version of this poem that circulated in Greek tradition.²²

¹⁸ Cf. Davison 1965, 12: 'In any case it is clear that, whatever poem it may have been that Thucydides had in mind, it was not one which described the initial landing, or the events which followed immediately upon that, in any detail, if at all'.

¹⁹ See Gomme 1945, 114–15.

²⁰ On Thucydides' use of Herodotus see esp. Hornblower 1996, 19–38 and 122–45. If my inference is correct, the passage under discussion would fall into Hornblower's category of 'the kind of Thucydidean text which positively assumes knowledge of Herodotus, and reads awkwardly or even mystifyingly without such knowledge' (p. 125).

²¹ Apollod. *Epit.* 3.28–31; transl. J.G. Frazer, with slight changes.

²² See further below, ch. 26.

Like Proclus, Apollodorus does not mention the building of the fortifications, but it is reasonable to suppose that the drawing up of the ships that he describes amounts to much the same. Compare indeed *Iliad* 14.30–32:

πολλὸν γάρ ῥ' ἀπάνευθε μάχης εἰρύατο νῆες
θῖν' ἔφ' ἄλός πολιτς· τὰς γὰρ πρῶτας πεδίονδε
εἵρυσαν, αὐτὰρ τεῖχος ἐπὶ πρύμνησιν ἔδειμαν.

For their ships had been pulled up on the shore of the grey sea far away from the fighting, as the first ships in had been hauled right inland, and the wall built along their sterns.

This passage was often adduced as proof that the fortification of the Achaean camp as described in *Iliad* 7 is an interpolation: there can indeed be no doubt that the passage in question envisages the building of the fortifications as having taken place at the very beginning of the war.²³ But what is especially relevant to the present discussion is that the drawing up of the ships at the beginning of the campaign is presented in *Iliad* 14 as being followed by the fortification of the camp.

Both Apollodorus' account and that of Proclus make it clear that the landing, rather than forming a self-contained episode, was originally treated as the conclusion to Achilles' victory over Cycnus. This would explain the fluctuation, so conspicuous in our sources, between the forming of the camp, the building of the wall, the drawing of the ships, and the burying of the dead as alternative continuations of the landing or sometimes even as its substitutes.²⁴ Thus, although the tradition as regards the beginning of the Trojan War displays some fluctuation in details, the cluster of subjects 'The Death of Protesilaus', 'The Duel of Achilles and Cycnus, or the Landing', and 'The Negotiations about Helen' is common to all the sources which treat this theme. We can conclude, therefore, that the three subjects in question were firmly associated in Greek tradition with the war's initial stage. Accordingly, if *Iliad* 7 was cast after a source dealing with the beginning of the Trojan War, it would be reasonable to suppose that its poet used elements of the landing, such as the burying of the dead and the fortification of the camp, and ignored the Achilles-Cycnus duel which made the landing possible.

²³ For discussion see Kirk 1990, 277–78.

²⁴ It might be suggested that both Proclus and Apollodorus omitted the description of the fortification of the camp as part of the landing episode because such a description would have been at variance with the text of the *Iliad*, cf. Bolling 1925, 93. Note indeed that in his account of the subsequent events Apollodorus follows Homer closely, relating the Hector-Ajax duel and the building of the wall exactly as they are described in *Iliad* 7, see *Epit.* 4.2–3.

At the same time, it is not out of the question that the Achilles-Cycnus duel inspired the duel of Ajax and Hector, which precedes Nestor's proposal to bury the dead and fortify the camp and thus, similar to the Achilles-Cycnus duel, introduces the theme of the landing. Much has been written of the inappropriateness of this episode, which is poorly motivated and fulfils no significant function in the poem.²⁵ Interestingly, *Iliad* 7 contains a peculiar detail which is not found in any other single combat described in the poem: although at the beginning of their fight Hector and Ajax use the conventional spears, they end it by throwing stones at each other (vv. 262–72). 'Only here', Kirk comments, 'is a stone-throw met by a counter-throw'.²⁶ Now according to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (12.83ff.), Cycnus was invulnerable to metal, and Achilles killed him by strangling him with the thongs of his own helmet. Proclus' account of the *Cypria* does not detail the circumstances of Cycnus' death, but Apollodorus does have Achilles kill Cycnus by throwing a stone at his head. This seems to suggest that it was Cycnus' invulnerability (known also to Aristotle)²⁷ that caused Achilles to kill him by stone in Apollodorus' source. Hector's immediate recovery from Ajax's terrible blow, although explained by that he was instantly raised by Apollo, is unconvincing, and the same is true of the conclusion of the duel as a whole. In view of this, it may be suggested that the Hector-Ajax duel ended as it did because the entire episode was modelled after another one, which made no provision for a recovery from the stone-hit.

As far as we know, the only traditional source which treated the beginning of the Trojan War was the *Cypria*. This seems to indicate that all the variants mentioned above, including those that do not detail their source, ultimately stem from different versions of this poem. Accordingly, we may suggest the following table of correspondences:

<i>Cypria</i>	<i>Iliad</i> 7
The death of Protesilaus	Evocation of the death of Protesilaus
Achilles-Cycnus duel	Ajax-Hector duel
fortification of the camp	negotiations about Helen ²⁸
negotiations about Helen	fortification of the camp

²⁵ See esp. Mazon 1943, 169–73, and Kirk 1990, 230–31.

²⁶ Kirk 1990, 270.

²⁷ *Rhet.* 1396b16–18.

²⁸ Note also the prominence of Antenor in both Apollodorus' version of the Negotiations about Helen (above, with n. 21) and the one given in *Iliad* 7.345–64.

We can conclude, therefore, that *Iliad* 7 does not simply evoke several episodes properly belonging to the *Cypria* but, rather, consistently adapts for its own purposes the entire cluster of subjects associated in Greek tradition with the initial stage of the Trojan War. The *Cypria* material thus acts as a blueprint, as it were, of *Iliad* 7.²⁹

3

When approached from the standpoint of the theory of oral composition, the parallels between Homer and the Epic Cycle should be regarded as independent variants of a common tradition. It seems, however, that the relationship of *Iliad* 7 to the Trojan tradition can hardly be satisfactorily accounted for along these lines. The manner in which it handles other Trojan subjects shows clearly enough that, rather than presenting yet another variant of the common tradition, *Iliad* 7 is possessed of a special status, in that its existence is predicated on that of other traditional poems dealing with the Trojan War. Needless to say, this is not how oral poetics is supposed to work.³⁰

One of the effects that the Parry-Lord theory has had on Homeric scholarship is the emergence of a tacit assumption that, insofar as the oral traditional background of the Homeric poems can be seen as firmly established, nothing remains to be explained about the mode of their functioning. It is doubtful, however, whether the comparative evidence of other oral poetries or, for that matter, of other poems within Greek epic tradition itself is as relevant to Homer as many like to believe. E.L. Bowie's warning against uncritical application to the Homeric poems of the evidence offered by the Southslavic tradition seems to be appropriate here:

We should also take account of the fact that the poems we have must stand at the end of a tradition of which they themselves and their creator(s) cannot have been entirely typical.

29 A similar situation can be observed in *Iliad* 2, where the mustering of the troops described towards the end of the book is preceded at some distance by Odysseus' reminiscence of the departure from Aulis and the omen of the snake and the sparrows by which it was accompanied. As can be learnt from the *Cypria*, both belong to the same cluster of subjects: 'All the leaders then meet together at Aulis and sacrifice. The incident of the serpent and the sparrows takes place before them, and Calchas foretells what is going to befall'. (Allen 1912, 104.1–3 [= *Cypr.* arg. 6 West], cf. *Il.* 2.299–332, 441–785).

30 Cf. Dowden 1996, 58; cf. also below, ch. 16.

In many details of their handling of their story and characters, both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are very self-conscious poems; and some awareness of the processes that created them should not be denied to their poet merely on analogy with other cultures.³¹

That Homer, as we have seen, often worked by reshaping and adaptation of other Trojan subjects shows clearly enough that, at least in the cases for which this practice can be shown to be relevant, he treated the Trojan saga as raw material for the *Iliad*, thus elevating the latter to the unique status of metaepic.³² This seems to indicate that the *Iliad* cannot be unreservedly approached as just one traditional poem among many: the traditional poetics is applied in this poem side by side with a nontraditional one, and our task is to take account of both.

³¹ Bowie 1993, 18; cf. Dowden 1996, 60–61.

³² Cf. Finkelberg 1998, 154–55, and below, chs. 15 and 17. On the metatextual status of the Homeric *Odyssey* see Martin 1993.

15 The End of the Heroic Age in Homer, Hesiod and the Cycle

1

Like the traditional poetries of other peoples, that of the Greeks celebrated the Heroic Age.¹ This was the time when men were bigger and stronger, and they performed marvellous feats of prowess. The gods kept company with mortals, and even consorted with mortal women and conceived sons with them. This is why the heroes of Greek legend, mortal though they were, were considered divine offspring, ‘demigods’, who belonged to the Race of Heroes. The Heroic Age came to an end in two great wars, the Theban and the Trojan, that were especially designed by Zeus to put an end to the Race of Heroes. Introducing a terminology not unlike that used in modern archaeology, Hesiod placed the Heroic Age between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, the poet’s own time.² This was how the Bronze Age past was remembered in Greek tradition.

The standard account of the destruction of the Race of Heroes is Hesiod’s in the *Works and Days*:

... the godly race of the heroes (ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος) who are called demigods (ἡμιθεοί), our predecessors on the boundless earth. And as for them, ugly war and fearful fighting destroyed them, some below seven-gated Thebes, the Cadmean country, as they battled for Oedipus’ flocks, and others it led in ships over the great abyss of the sea to Troy on account of lovely-haired Helen. There some of them were engulfed by the consummation of death, but to some Zeus the father, son of Cronus, granted a life and home apart from men, and settled them at the ends of the earth. These dwell with carefree heart in the Isles of the Blessed Ones, beside deep-swirling Ocean: fortunate heroes (ὄλβιοι ἦρωες), for whom the grain-giving soil bears its honey-sweet fruits thrice a year.³

A somewhat different version of the end of the Race of Heroes is preserved in the concluding part of the *Catalogue of Women*, or *Ehoiai*, a comprehensive genealogical poem composed within the Hesiodic school sometime in the late archaic period, but undoubtedly belonging to the centuries-long genealogical tradition

¹ On the comparative aspects of the myth of a Heroic Age see H.M. Chadwick 1912; Chadwick and Chadwick 1932, 13–18.

² Hes. *Op.* 174–76.

³ Hes. *Op.* 159–73; transl. M. West.

of the Greeks.⁴ This corrupted passage, which follows the description of Helen's wedding and was presumably concluded with a reference to the Trojan War, can be reconstructed as follows:

Now all the gods were divided through strife; for at that very time Zeus who thunders on high was meditating marvellous deeds, even to mingle storm and tempest over the boundless earth, and already he was hastening to make an utter end of the race of mortal men (γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων), declaring that he would destroy the lives of the demigods (ψυχὰς ἡμιθέων), that the children of the gods [...] with [...] mortals, seeing [...] with their own eyes; but that the blessed [gods] henceforth even as aforetime should have their living and their habitations apart from men. But on those who were born of immortals and of mankind (ἄθα|νάτω|ν τε ἰδὲ| θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων) verily Zeus laid toil and sorrow upon sorrow.⁵

As Jenny Strauss Clay has shown, the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* is yet another early source that associates, albeit implicitly, the termination of unions between gods and mortal women with the end of the Heroic Age, in that 'the final upshot of Zeus's intervention is to make Aphrodite cease and desist from bringing about these inappropriate unions between the gods and mortals, which, in turn, will mean the end of the age of heroes'.⁶

Finally, in the scholiast's quotation of what almost certainly belonged to the lost proem of the Cyclic *Cypria* we find:

There was a time when the countless tribes of men, though wide-dispersed, oppressed the surface of the deep-bosomed earth, and Zeus saw it and had pity and in his wise heart resolved to relieve the all-nurturing earth of men by causing the great struggle of the Ilian war, that the load of death might empty the world. And so the heroes (ἥρωες) were slain in Troy, and the plan of Zeus came to pass.⁷

It seems significant in this connection that, although all the passages adduced above refer to the end of the Race of Heroes, they treat this subject independently of each other. The difference of emphasis, of detail, the different choice of traditional expressions (only the trivial 'over the boundless earth', κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν, being repeated in both Hesiodic texts)—all these strongly suggest that the destruction of the Race of Heroes was an all-pervasive theme which crossed the

⁴ Janko 1982, 85–87, places it in the seventh century BCE, whereas M. West 1985, 136, argues for a later date in the middle of the sixth century. On the traditional character of the *Catalogue* see below, ch. 25.

⁵ [Hes.] fr. 204. 95–105 M-W. Transl. H.G. Evelyn-White.

⁶ Clay 1989, 166. Cf. *H.Ven.* 247–53.

⁷ *Cypr.* fr. 1 Bernabé/West.

boundaries between epic traditions. So much so that in Genesis 6: 1–5, just before the Flood episode, we find:

When people began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they married such of them as they chose... The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth etc.

The commentators of the Bible, both ancient and modern, have had no clear idea what to make of this ‘strange passage’.⁸ Yet the Genesis passage makes perfectly good sense when taken against the background of Greek heroic tradition. Its similarity to the passage from the *Catalogue of Women* quoted above is especially noteworthy.⁹ This seems to indicate that versions of the myth of the destruction of the Race of Heroes, probably a reflection of the historical cataclysm that accompanied the end of the Bronze Age, circulated not only in Greece but also in wider regions of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Although the Homeric poems certainly belonged to the same heroic tradition about the Trojan War as the Cyclic *Cypria*, the theme of the end of heroes, inseparable from the story of the Trojan War as told in Hesiod and the Cycle, is conspicuous by its absence in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It is true of course that ‘the plan of Zeus’, the notorious *Dios Boulē* referred to in the proem of the *Iliad*, is strongly reminiscent of the same expression in the proem of the *Cypria* quoted above; however, the theme of the destruction of the Race of Heroes is irrelevant to the rest of the *Iliad* to such a degree that the scholarly consensus since Aristarchus has been almost unanimous in taking this expression as referring to the promise that Zeus gives to Thetis later in the same book.¹⁰ It is also true that, as Ruth Scodel argued in an important article, the passage in *Iliad* 12 referring to the future destruction of the Achaean Wall by Poseidon and Apollo, with its hapax ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν, may well have evoked the destruction of the Race of Heroes.¹¹ Yet the same passage states unequivocally that after the end of the war those of the Greeks who stayed alive simply and prosaically went home.¹² In view of this, it is difficult not to agree with J.B. Hainsworth’s comment *ad locum* that

⁸ See further Kugel 1997, 108–14; cf. Finkelberg 2005, 161–63.

⁹ Cf. M. West 1997, 117–18.

¹⁰ *Il.* 1.5. See Kirk 1985, 53; cf. Schein 1984, 59–60, with n. 34; Slatkin 1991, 118–22.

¹¹ *Il.* 12.23. Scodel 1982, 33–50.

¹² *Il.* 12.14 πολλοὶ δ’ Ἀργείων οἱ μὲν δάμεν, οἱ δὲ λίποντο; 12.16 Ἀργεῖοι δ’ ἐν νηυσὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδ’ ἔβησαν.

‘within his narrative Homer does not recognize them [the heroes] as a separate class of being and therefore has no use for the present term, which occurs only here in the *Iliad*’.¹³ Again, Proteus’ prophecy in *Odyssey* 4, according to which Menelaus will be taken after his death to Elysium, evokes the Isles of the Blessed, the final abode of the Heroes in Hesiod, but when taken against the general background of the Homeric epics, whose characters invariably die ordinary deaths, Menelaus’ fate is rather the exception that proves the rule.¹⁴ As Scodel put it, ‘In Homer, the continuity of history from the heroes to the poet’s contemporaries is complete’.¹⁵

2

In the Homeric scholarship that preceded the emergence of the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition, textual interrelations between Homer and other traditional poetry were invariably approached in terms of *imitatio*. That is to say, the supposed interval of time between Homer and other epic poetry was regarded as crucial for the evaluation of their relationship: insofar as a given epic poet was close to Homer he could be seen as imitating him, and insofar as he diverged from his alleged model he could be seen as deliberately innovating. On this assumption, the subject of the destruction of the Race of Heroes should be regarded as post-Homeric. However, as soon as we admit that the interval of time does not separate two thoroughly individual compositions but rather the dates at which two traditional poems were fixed, our assessment of the way in which these two poems relate to each other must adopt a different line.

The impact of Milman Parry’s work on Homeric scholarship was felt, among other things, in the recognition of the fact that parallels between two traditional texts may well indicate that these are two independent variants of a common tradition. As G.P. Edwards put it in his discussion of the phrases common to Hesiod and the *Odyssey*: ‘We can never rule out the existence of an older place X, which provided a common source for both A and B at the lines in question, so making their chronological relationship impossible to determine’.¹⁶ This however does not mean that, as is sometimes argued, oral traditional poetry cannot be approached in terms of intertextuality. Recently, Ken Dowden has made a strong

¹³ Hainsworth 1993, 320. Cf. Scodel 1982, 34: ‘This is the only place in the two epics where the heroes are called ἥμῖνοι or are characterized as a different γένος from later men’.

¹⁴ *Od.* 4.561–65. Cf. Griffin 1980, 167; S. West in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 227.

¹⁵ Scodel 1982, 35.

¹⁶ G.P. Edwards 1971, 189.

case for the legitimacy of intertextual approach to epic tradition, arguing that any new performance of a traditional poem is related to all the previous performances and gains its sense from that relationship. 'For each myth/subject, regardless of whether there is reference to a specific hypothext (this or that poet's telling), there is an intertext which, except in some peculiarly disputed or little-known myth, will amount to what Kullmann called *Faktenkanon*, a standard event-list'.¹⁷ The relationship between the poems of Homer and the poems of the Cycle as it comes to light in contemporary Homeric scholarship is the most conspicuous example.

As is well known, the Homeric epics represent only a fraction of the mythological tradition about the Trojan War. The knowledge of the larger story of the war came to the Greeks from other sources, first and foremost from the poems of the Epic Cycle. We are thus confronted with a paradox: if the Cycle poems are not only younger than the poems of Homer but also, as traditionally supposed, composed with the sole purpose of completing the story of the war as told in the Homeric poems,¹⁸ where should the authoritative representation of the Trojan tradition be found? Since the 1940s, the date of the emergence of the Neoanalytic school in Homeric scholarship, more and more scholars have been ready to entertain the possibility that in everything concerning the general picture of the Trojan War the Homeric poems presuppose the tradition represented in the poems of the Cycle rather than vice versa.

Whether or not the poems of the Epic Cycle as we know them historically preceded the Homeric epics, it cannot be denied that both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* lean heavily upon the nomenclature of Trojan subjects dealt with in the Cyclic poems.¹⁹ This does not mean that, as the pioneers of Neoanalysis sometimes suggested, the source of the Homeric poems should necessarily have been the Cyclic poems themselves. It is much more likely that both the Cyclic epics and Homer ultimately drew from the common stock of traditional subjects concerning the Trojan War.²⁰ That is to say, even if it can be shown that Homer incorporates Cyclic material, this would not necessarily mean that it was the texts of the Cyclic poems as we know them that he had in mind. However that may be, there can be little doubt that the debt the Homeric poems owe to the tradition represented by the poems of the Cycle is considerable (see below, pp. 169–73).

¹⁷ Dowden 1996, 51–52. See also Foley 1991 and 1999; Danek 1998 and 2002, 3–19.

¹⁸ This point has recently been questioned in Burgess 2001, 132–48; according to Burgess, at some stage the Cyclic poems, some of which probably embraced the entire story of the Trojan War, were cut down in such a way as to make them fit the Homeric poems.

¹⁹ See further Finkelberg 1998, 141–50 and below, ch. 17; cf. Burgess 2001, 47–49.

²⁰ See Kakridis 1949, 93; Schein 1984, 28; M.W. Edwards 1990; Kullmann 1991, 427–28.

In view of Homer's close acquaintance with Trojan themes treated in the poems of the Cycle, it is highly implausible that he could have had no knowledge of such a pivotal event as the destruction of the Race of Heroes in the Trojan War. Accordingly, Homer's failure to explicitly mention this event makes his silence heavily marked. To paraphrase the expression coined by Dowden, by the very fact of refusing reference to the end of the Race of Heroes Homer makes the reference.²¹ In other words, it is reasonable to suppose that by suppressing this traditional theme Homer is making a statement of some kind. To enquire into the nature of this statement is our next task.

3

As we saw in Section 1, there is more than one indication that Homer's idea of the Trojan War was based on the presumption that, quite contrary to the widespread myth of the destruction of the Race of Heroes, there was a direct continuity between Greece of the Heroic Age and historic Greece. What difference could the establishment of such a continuity make?

In Hesiod, the story of the end of the Race of Heroes is part of a larger teleological scheme according to which the history of mankind is a process of gradual degeneration from the Golden Age, which accompanied the dawn of humanity, to the Iron Age, man's present condition. Needless to say, this attitude to the past implied a distinctly negative view of the present. Hesiod's description of the Race of Iron that replaced the Race of Heroes makes this attitude especially manifest:

Thereafter, would that I were not among the men of the fifth generation, but either had died before or been born afterwards. For now truly is a race of iron, and men never rest from labour and sorrow by day, and from perishing by night; and the gods shall lay sore trouble upon them.²²

But the same attitude can also be discerned in the dark prophecies that conclude the description of the end of the Race of Heroes in the *Catalogue of Women*, and the poet of the *Cypria*, in that he makes Helen the daughter of Nemesis, clearly shares the same pessimistic vision.²³ In suppressing the myth of the destruction of the Race of Heroes Homer changes the negative perspective on the present

²¹ Dowden 1996, 53.

²² Hes. *Op.* 174–78; transl. Evelyn-White.

²³ [Hes.] fr. 204.102–17 M-W; *Cypria* fr. 9 Bernabé [fr. 10 West].

adopted in other epic poetry. In other words, the statement that Homer makes concerns not so much the past as the present.

‘The intertextual relations of the text are never purely literary’: this remark of the literary theorist Catherine Belsey holds remarkably good in the case under discussion.²⁴ Homer’s refusal of reference to the traditional subject of the destruction of the Race of Heroes cannot be taken separately from the large-scale developments that were taking place at the same period and that are sometimes given the collective name of the ‘eighth-century Renaissance.’²⁵ In full conformity with the positive self-image promoted by the new Greek civilization that emerged from the Dark Age, Homer reverses the pessimistic view of the present adopted in other traditional poetry. Instead of being an embodiment of the end of the old era, as in Hesiod and the Cycle, the Trojan War came to represent the beginning of a new one. Codification of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Athens of the sixth century BCE was the first step in transformation of the standard text of Homer thus established into the foundational text of the ancient Greek civilization.²⁶ The Homeric poems began to be recited at the highly prestigious Panathenaic festival, which was among the central events of the public life of the city and of the whole of Greece. They also became the basis of elementary education, to be memorized at schools all over the Greek world. This was probably why it was Homer’s version of the Heroic Age rather than the one found in the Hesiodic corpus and the poems of the Cycle that became canonical. This is not to say that the traditional version of the Heroic Age and its collapse in the Trojan War disappeared altogether. Yet from then on its proper place was in scholarly commentaries rather than in the collective memory of the Greeks.

To recapitulate, Homer’s suppression of the traditional myth of the destruction of the Race of Heroes in the Trojan War was part of a larger strategy purporting to transform the heroic past into one of the main factors in establishing the positive self-image of the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE. From now on, Achilles and Brasidas, Nestor and Pericles could be mentioned, as for example in Plato’s *Symposium*, in

²⁴ Belsey 1988, 407.

²⁵ See further below, ch. 24.

²⁶ See below, ch. 27.

the same breath, simply because they were seen as existing within the same historic space.²⁷ Clearly, this could not have been accomplished had the Race of Heroes continued to be envisaged, as in Hesiod and the Cycle, as an extinct race having nothing in common with the degenerate people of the present.²⁸

²⁷ Pl. *Symp.* 221.

²⁸ An earlier version of this article was read at the conference 'Homer and His Contemporaries' held in honour of Mark W. Edwards by the Department of Classics of Stanford University in October 2001. It was also read at the Department of Classics of Cornell University. My thanks are due to all those who attended the talks and participated in the discussion.

16 Homer and his Peers: Neoanalysis, Oral Theory, and the Status of Homer

1

For many years, Homer had been considered a towering figure, a lonely star, as it were, the foundational poet at the beginning of things. All other poetry had been supposed to appear after Homer and therefore to be derivative by definition. This picture of Homer and his position in the history of Greek poetry began to alter towards the middle of the twentieth century, with the emergence of two trends that precipitated what can without hesitation be called a paradigm shift in the Homeric studies: Oral-Formulaic Theory and Neoanalysis.

Although developed independently of each other, the two trends have shown, each in its own way, that the Homeric poems were part of a flourishing epic tradition, so that it would be historically and methodologically untenable to take the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in isolation from their traditional milieu. More specifically, the oralists' work has made clear that Homer's formulaic language, and especially his noun-epithet formulae for gods and heroes, is too rich and ramified to be considered the creation of a single man, whereas the Neoanalysts have demonstrated that in everything concerning the general picture of the Trojan War the Homeric poems presuppose the tradition represented by the poems of the Trojan Cycle rather than vice versa. From now on, it was only a matter of time that these two trends, one predominantly English-speaking, the other predominantly German-speaking, would start cross-fertilizing each other.

In 1984, Wolfgang Kullmann published his 'Oral Poetry Theory and Neoanalysis in Homeric Research'. In this landmark article, Kullmann wrote about the Cyclic poems: 'Although these poems are thought to be composed after Homer, neoanalytic scholars think that a great part of their contents had been delivered orally long before the Homeric epics. Their record in writing may be post-Homeric'.¹ This recognition of the fact that the sources on which Homer drew were oral rather than written signalled a radical shift in the original Neoanalyst position. At the same time, this was as far as a Neoanalyst would go. Further on in the same article, Kullmann argued as against the oralists that, first, the Homeric poems enjoyed a special status in Greek heroic tradition and, second, this special

1 Kullmann 1984, 309.

status can only be properly accounted for if we assume that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed with the help of writing.² This still remains the predominant view of German-speaking scholarship.

Now, from the standpoint of oral-formulaic theory, the idea of a traditional text's special status vis-à-vis other texts is clearly indefensible, for the simple reason that all traditional texts are by definition assumed to be variants of the common tradition. This is why, when scholars who had been trained in oral theory conceded to the Neoanalyst argument concerning Homer's awareness of the story of the Trojan War as told in the poems of the Cycle, this did not affect their fundamentally oralist position, namely, that the parallels between Homer and the Cycle, though undeniable, can only be explained as mutually independent traditional variants. To my knowledge, the first to apply this argument was Seth Schein in his *Mortal Hero*, which also appeared in 1984. When addressing the duel of Patroclus and Sarpedon in *Iliad* 16, which, as the Neoanalysts famously argued, evokes the Achilles-Memnon duel as described in the Cyclic *Aethiopis*, Schein wrote: 'While there can be no doubt that some of the scenes and speeches in the *Iliad* must resemble those that occurred in the *Aethiopis*, it is best to consider these scenes and speeches of the two epics as variants of the same fluid oral tradition rather than as dependent the one upon the other'.³ This would still be the dominant view of English-speaking scholarship.

To sum up, while the representatives of both trends agree that Homer should not be regarded in isolation from the orally-based heroic tradition, they sharply disagree as to his position within it. As far as I can see, the main reasons for this discrepancy are, first, that Neoanalysis makes no provision for an oral Homer, and, second, that oral theory makes no provision for status differences between traditional texts, thus being devoid of clearly defined criteria by which the position of a given text as regards other texts in the same tradition can be assessed. In what follows, I will mainly concentrate on the latter.

² Kullmann 1984, 319: 'The assertion that the *Iliad* was composed in writing is not a necessary consequence of the neoanalytic approach. The results obtained by this approach do, however, suggest written composition'.

³ Schein 1984, 28.

2

The most salient characteristic of a traditional text is the relation of mutual reciprocity that exists between it and all the other texts in a given tradition. Essentially, this is what is meant when we say that two texts are variants of the common tradition. The traditional texts do not presuppose each other and are normally not aware of each other's existence: what they do presuppose is the virtual common prototype of which they are independent manifestations. By the same token, the lack of reciprocity between two texts would take place when one of these texts shows a degree of awareness as to the existence of the other. This awareness can take the form of quotation, of direct or indirect allusion, of parody or, in stronger cases, of reshaping the other text or texts which treat the same subject and thus challenging their authority. It goes without saying that a text that stands in this kind of relationship to all the other texts treating the same subject can no longer be regarded as just one traditional variant among many: rather, this would be a text which claims a special status within the tradition to which it belongs.

Now there is more than one reason why we should see in the Homeric poems precisely this kind of text. It is a matter of common knowledge ever since Aristotle that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* differ from the other Trojan epics in that, though featuring just two single episodes in the history of the Trojan War, they at the same time provide a picture of the war as a whole. More specifically, both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* evoke, re-enact or retell many Trojan episodes that properly belong with the poems of the Cycle. Owing to this strategy, they manage to create a comprehensive picture of the Trojan War while abstaining, at the same time, from recounting the story of the war from the beginning to the end. This allows the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not only to distance themselves from the Cycle poems but also to turn these poems into raw material, as it were, for creating something completely new.⁴

In recent decades, some far-reaching results reinforcing this thesis have been achieved by scholars who, seeking to combine the Neoanalyst *Quellenforschung* with the principles of oral theory, have arrived at the conclusion that Homer uses his tradition in a highly idiosyncratic way. Let me take two examples.

In her path-breaking study *The Power of Thetis: allusion and interpretation in the Iliad* (1991) Laura Slatkin has shown how, owing to its extensive use of allusion, the *Iliad* not only 'reverberates' against the background of the broader epic tradition of the end of the Heroic Age but also reshapes this tradition and thus,

⁴ Finkelberg 1998, 131–60; cf. Burgess 2009, 56–71 and above, ch. 14, 148–49.

eventually, re-interprets it so as to make it suit its own agenda. Thus, when discussing in the concluding chapter Homer's use of the myth of Destruction of the Race of Heroes, she writes:

Yet the Homeric poems, as this study began by observing, are interpreters of their mythological resources at every step; and 'destruction' as understood by the traditions represented by Hesiod, the Cycle, and Mesopotamian literature has been reinterpreted by the *Iliad* and translated into its own terms. The *Iliad* evokes these traditions, through passages that retrieve the theme of destruction, to place them ultimately in a perspective that, much as it rejects immortality, rejects utter annihilation as well. Components of the mythological complex of the end of the race survive in Iliadic allusions, and reverberate, but are transformed.⁵

In view of this, it strikes one as a paradox that a book that ends with such a powerful statement of Homer's special status within Greek epic tradition would begin with an aprioristic definition of Homer as just one traditional poet among many. In the opening chapter of the same book we find: '...the Cycle poems inherit traditions contingent to our *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and preserve story patterns, motifs, and type-scenes that are as archaic as the material in the Homeric poems, to which they are related collaterally, rather than by descent. The Cycle poems and the *Iliad* offer invaluable mutual perspective on the recombination of elements deriving from a common source in myth'.⁶ The book's beginning and its end thus tell two different stories.

The latter quotation from Slatkin's book is adduced in full by Irad Malkin in his *Returns of Odysseus. Colonization and Ethnicity* (1998).⁷ Proceeding from the fact that some of the so-called lying stories about Odysseus that are being told in the poem refer to Epirus, Malkin links together shreds of evidence relating to the relevance of Odysseus' legend to Epirus and other parts of northwestern Greece and builds a powerful case for what he calls 'the *Odyssey*'s alternatives'—the alternatives, it must be added, of which the *Odyssey* itself was fully aware. Especially noteworthy is the story that the disguised Odysseus twice tells in Ithaca: according to this story, before going back home Odysseus left his treasure in Epirus with the Thesprotian king Pheidon and went to Dodona, to ask the oracle whether he should return home openly or in secret.⁸ 'Thus Thesprotia', Malkin writes, '... fulfils the function of the cave of the nymphs in the "real" story'.⁹ Now

⁵ Slatkin 1991, 121–22.

⁶ Slatkin 1991, 11–12.

⁷ See also below, ch. 23.

⁸ *Od.* 14.314–35; 19.285–302.

⁹ Malkin 1998, 129.

Epirus played a prominent part in the lost Cycle epics *Thesprotis* and *Telegony*, traditional poems that dealt with the continuation of the Odysseus story. In other words, although ‘the *Odyssey*’s alternatives’ are presented in the Homeric poem as lies, they are in all probability nothing else as authentic representatives of a pre-Odyssean tradition about Odysseus’ return, a tradition from which the *Odyssey* as we know it is a deviation.¹⁰

This strongly suggests that, contrary to Malkin’s own contention, the *Odyssey* and ‘the *Odyssey*’s alternatives’ cannot be simply placed on one plane as if they were variations on the same theme. Moreover, in that they do not presuppose at all Odysseus’ eventual homecoming, ‘the *Odyssey*’s alternatives’ sharply disagree with the Homeric *Odyssey*, for which the protagonist’s return to Ithaca is a *sine qua non*. By the very fact of turning the alternative versions of the Return of Odysseus into ‘lying stories’ the *Odyssey* poet undermines their status. In other words, the relationship between the Homeric *Odyssey* and the Odysseus tradition is anything but reciprocal. As in the case of the *Iliad*’s treatment of the Myth of Destruction (above), the poet of the *Odyssey* both reshapes the tradition he inherited and adapts it to his own agenda, which obviously do not concur with those of his sources: this is how a myth of leaving home for foreign lands is transformed in our *Odyssey* into a myth of homecoming.

The question as to the nature of the agenda pursued by Homer in his deviations from his tradition is irrelevant to the present discussion.¹¹ The important thing is that, here as elsewhere, rather than offering just another variant of the common tradition, Homer not only transforms the earlier traditions about the Trojan War and the Returns but also suppresses some of them. As a result, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* act as symbolic compendia of the entire history of the Trojan War and the Returns. While literary merits of this compositional technique were commended as early as Aristotle,¹² it has rarely been taken into account that what is being dealt with is far from purely a matter of composition. By the very fact of reinterpreting the other versions of the Trojan saga, Homer signals their subordinate status as regards his own poems and privileges the version that he offers. That he is nevertheless anxious to show his awareness of these other versions indicates that he meant his poems not only to reshape the other traditions but also to absorb and, eventually, to supersede them, thus claiming for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the privileged status of metaepics.¹³ It goes without saying that

¹⁰ See also Reece 1994 and ch. 17 below.

¹¹ It is discussed above, ch. 15, and below, ch. 18, 193–95.

¹² *Poet.* 1451a 23–30; 1459a 30–b7.

¹³ Finkelberg 1998, 155, cf. ch. 14, 149; ‘metacyclic’ in Burgess 2009, 66.

such an attitude creates a lack of reciprocity between Homer on the one hand and the other traditional epics on the other. When approached from the standpoint of oral theory, this lack of reciprocity would indicate that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* cannot be regarded as just two traditional poems among many.

3

Especially significant are the cases in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be shown to disagree both with Homer's own tradition as represented by the Trojan Cycle and with that of Hesiod. Thus, for example, the myth of the end of the Race of Heroes referred to above appears both in the Cyclic *Cypria* and in the Hesiodic corpus. At the same time, the circumstances of this momentous event that these traditional sources present are far from being identical. To take only one example, while in Hesiod the end of the Race of Heroes is part of a larger sequence in which in the course of time each generation of men is destroyed to be replaced by a new one, in the *Cypria* it directly results from Zeus' decision to relieve the Earth from the burden of mankind.¹⁴ This strongly suggests that the *Cypria* and Hesiod treat the theme of the end of the Race of Heroes independently of each other. That is to say, they relate to each other just as variants of common tradition would. Not so in the case of Homer. Although the Homeric poems certainly belonged to the same branch of heroic tradition as the *Cypria*, they either emphatically ignore the theme of the end of the Race of Heroes or reshape and reinterpret it, employing these two mutually complementary strategies in order to serve their own agenda.¹⁵ Again, this is not how a variant of a common tradition would behave.

Let us dwell at some length on another example that, as far as I know, has not yet drawn scholarly attention. I mean the case of Calchas. The diviner of the Achaean fleet and personally of Agamemnon, Calchas son of Thestor is introduced in the *Iliad* as 'the best of the augurs' (*oiônopoloι Il.* 1.69; cf. 13.70), who knows the past, the present and the future and whose gift of prophecy (*mantosunē*), granted by Apollo, enabled him to lead the Achaean ships to Troy (1.70–72). In Homer, Calchas appears only in Books 1 and 2 of the *Iliad*. Nevertheless, his role is essential for the development of the plot line of the poem, for he is the one who discloses before the assembly the cause of Apollo's wrath which brought the plague on the Achaean camp and thus triggers the quarrel between Achilles

¹⁴ Hes. *Op.* 159–73; *Cypria* fr. 1 Bernabé/West.

¹⁵ See further above, ch. 15 and below, ch. 17, 180–81.

and Agamemnon (1.73–110). In Book 2, Odysseus reminds the rest of the Achaeans of how the portent of the snake and the sparrows that they witnessed in Aulis at the very beginning of the Trojan expedition led Calchas to predict that the war will last ten years (299–330). The last time Calchas is mentioned in the poem is Book 13, where Poseidon, having taken the form and the voice of Calchas, admonishes the two Aiantes to withstand Hector's attack on the ships (45–58).

Calchas is much more prominent in other epic poetry, such as the poems of the Trojan Cycle and the Hesiodic corpus. According to Proclus' summary, the *Cypria* (arg. 6–8 West) included three episodes in which Calchas was actively involved: the portent of the snake and the sparrows, evoked also in *Iliad* 2 (above); the story of Telephus; and the sacrifice of Iphigenia, which is not mentioned in Homer. Especially interesting, however, is the extra-Homeric tradition as regards what happened to Calchas after the Trojan War.

Both the Cyclic *Nostoi* (*Returns*) (arg. 2 West) and a Hesiodic poem (probably, *Melampodia* ([Hes.] fr. 278 M-W) tell us that after the Trojan War Calchas, together with other Achaeans—the Lapiths Leonteus and Polypoites in the *Nostoi* and Amphilocheus son of Amphiaras in the *Melampodia*, travelled on foot to Colophon in Asia Minor; according to the *Melampodia*, Calchas died there of a broken heart after having been defeated in a competition of divination by young Mopsus, the son of Manto daughter of Tiresias ([Hes.] fr. 278 M-W. cf. fr. 279). This account, which was also known to Callinus and Sophocles and, in a slightly different form, to Pherecydes (Callin. fr. [8] W; Soph. fr. 181 Nauck; Pherecyd. fr. 142 Fowler; cf. Apollod. *Epit.* 6.2–4), is apparently part of the foundation story of the oracle of Apollo at Clarus. An additional and probably competing version, which involves Mopsus' mother Manto but does not mention Calchas, is found in a fragment from a poem from the Theban Cycle that told the story of the Epigoni (fr. 4 West). According to yet another version, preserved by Herodotus, Calchas did not die at Colophon but travelled farther east, eventually to become, together with Amphilocheus, the ancestor of the Pamphylians (Hdt. 7.91; quoted in Strab. 14.4.3; also Sophocles *apud* Strab. 14.5.16). He was also credited with founding Selge in Pisidia (Strab. 12.7.3)

We thus have a cluster of variants that directly or indirectly relate to what happened to Calchas after the Trojan War:

- Version 1 (the *Nostoi*): Calchas, in the company of Leonteus and Polypoites, made his way on foot to Colophon, where he probably died.¹⁶

¹⁶ 'Tiresias' of the text looks like a mistake for 'Calchas', cf. Apollod. *Epit.* 6.2 with M. West 155 n. 59 (on *Returns* arg. 2).

- Version 2 (the *Melampodia*, Callinus, Sophocles, Pherecydes): Calchas travelled to Colophon in the company of Amphilochochus and died there, being defeated by Tiresias' grandson Mopsus.
- Version 3 (the *Epigoni*): Manto daughter of Tiresias led the Theban fugitives to Colophon, where she founded the oracle of Apollo and gave birth to Mopsus.
- Version 4 (Herodotus and Sophocles *apud* Strabo): Calchas did not die at Colophon but proceeded to Pamphylia being accompanied, as in the *Melampodia*, by Amphilochochus.

It is not difficult to discern that in the final analysis all the versions adduced tell us one and the same story. It is the story of the migration of the Achaeans to Asia Minor after the wars of Thebes and Troy—the two great wars that, according to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, brought the end to the Race of Heroes—with three of them making a special emphasis on the foundation of Colophon. Amphilochochus and Mopsus appear in two versions, Tiresias in two or three, and Calchas in three. The version according to which Calchas dies at Colophon seems to have been the dominant one; nevertheless, there is also one, followed by Herodotus and probably also by Sophocles in one of his plays, according to which he proceeds to Pamphylia. These discrepancies show that the four versions under discussion develop the same traditional theme independently of each other, behaving exactly as the variants of a common tradition would. Those involving Calchas are however united by one common feature: they are sharply at variance with what Homer tells us about the man.

In Homer, Calchas is a humble and obedient servant of Agamemnon. He has such fear of his lord and master that he does not even dare to reveal before the assembly the cause of the plague until Achilles has guaranteed him his protection. In view of Calchas' subordinate position in the *Iliad*, it is somehow taken for granted that after the war he would become part of Agamemnon's *nostos*, travelling back to Mycenae and probably being murdered there together with the other attendants of the king. We have seen, however, that this is not what actually happens in the tradition treating the aftermath of the Trojan War. The details may vary, but one thing remains invariable: in both the Trojan Cycle and the Hesiodic corpus Calchas is represented as an independent agent who leads survivors of the Trojan War to new places of settlement in Asia Minor.¹⁷

¹⁷ The Trojan Cycle variant as found in the *Nostoi* is still the closest to Homer in that, as distinct from Amphilochochus of the *Melampodia*, the Lapiths Leonteus and Polypoites, who accompany Calchas in this version, are two acknowledged Iliadic figures: they are present in the Catalogue

As far as I can see, the fact that the Cyclic and the Hesiodic tradition coincide in their treatment of Calchas over the head of Homer indicates that what is being dealt with is the common tradition from which Homer deviates. Again, the reason for this deviation is irrelevant here. Much more important is the fact that the tradition of Calchas' migration as undertaken separately from Agamemnon's return suggests that initially Calchas was a much more prominent figure than the one we encounter in the *Iliad*.¹⁸ In view of this, the puzzling Iliadic lines 'and he led the ships of the Achaeans to Ilios in virtue of the skill of prophecy that Phoebus Apollo granted to him' (1.71–72), implying as they do Calchas' leading role in the Trojan expedition, may well indicate Homer's awareness of this fact.

However that may be, we can be sure of one thing: Homer offers a unique version of Calchas myth, one that suppresses all the other versions. Note that the same has also been observed above for the myth of the end of the Race of Heroes and for Odysseus' Return. Now, as distinct from the explicit parallels, in which the intertextual relationship cannot be established with certainty and we often cannot be sure as to the given motif's priority,¹⁹ such suppressions are one-sided by definition and are therefore heavily marked. Accordingly, they emphasize even more effectively the lack of reciprocity in Homer's relationship with his tradition.

4

Both the lack of reciprocity between Homer and other epic tradition and Homer's deviations from the points at which the two leading traditions of his time concur strongly suggest that Homeric poetry deliberately positioned itself as possessing of a special status within Greek epic tradition. We should not forget, however, that claiming a special status and attaining such a status are two different things. Only the combination of the text's claim to a special status and the community's granting it the status it demands would result in its enjoying a privileged position in the community. Let me take one last example.

'This tale is not true', Stesichorus claims in his *Palinode* when introducing a non-traditional version of Helen's story, 'nor did you go in the well-benched ships

of Ships and play a prominent part in the defense of the Achaean Wall and the Funeral Games for Patroclus (*Il.* 2.738–47, 12.128–94, 23.836–49).

¹⁸ A *herōon* in Apulia (Daunia) dedicated to Calchas (Strab. 6.3.9) and an Etruscan bronze mirror from Vulci, where he is depicted as examining the liver of a sacrificial victim, point in the same direction.

¹⁹ As pointed out in Burgess 2009, 61. See also Burgess 2006.

nor reach the citadels of Troy' (fr. 192 Lobel-Page). Stesichorus' claim that the traditional story of Helen's elopement is false reveals the same lack of reciprocity between the version he proposes and the traditional one as that observed above in the case of Homer's idiosyncratic versions, Odysseus' lying stories providing the closest parallel. Like Homer, Stesichorus is well aware of the traditional version that he aspires to supersede, thus claiming a privileged status to the new version that he offers. As we learn from Herodotus (2.112–17), Euripides' *Helen* and Plato's *Phaedrus* (243a), Stesichorus' version of Helen's story was known quite well in the classical period. Nevertheless, it failed to supersede the traditional one and has never become authoritative. The reason is simple: it was not accepted as such by the audience.

As distinct from this, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not only claimed for themselves the status of metaepics but were also granted it. This would be true even where, as in the case of Calchas, Homer can be shown to deviate from the common tradition: nevertheless, in this case as in many others, it is Homer's version rather than the traditional one as found in both the Trojan Cycle and the Hesiodic corpus that has become authoritative.

We saw that the main if not the only reason why the oralists are reluctant to admit that traditional texts may enjoy a special status is their contention that this would amount to recognizing, together with the Neoanalysts, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed with the help of writing.²⁰ It is however doubtful whether the distinction between the oral and the written may be considered a reliable guide of a text's elevation to a privileged status. Writing is far from being the only means by which a culture can privilege texts.²¹ Public performance is no less powerful a medium, and the example of the Panathenaia, a festival that secured Homer's status as the privileged text of classical Greece, may well have had its archaic precedents (see, e.g., *H. Ap.* 146–78).

The reason why Homer succeeded where the others failed is beyond the limits of the present discussion. What is important here is that, in the case of Homer, the internal (the text's claim to a special status) and the external (its recognition as such by the community) criteria coincide to indicate, contrary to the oralists'

20 But see now Burgess 2009, 68–69, according to whom the phenomena discussed above, that is, everything that can be subsumed under the Neoanalyst motif transference, may well be regarded as traditional and therefore as not alien to oral poetry. Burgess also admits that even so the phenomena of this kind would be more characteristic of Homer than of other traditional poetry.

21 For discussion see Finkelberg 2006.

opinion, that the position of the Homeric poems in Greek epic tradition was indeed unique. Contrary to the Neoanalysts' opinion, it is of little relevance whether it was in oral or in written form that they attained this position. As far as I can see, such recognition of Homer's special status as regards his tradition without at the same time making assumptions as to the material form assumed by the text would provide a common ground on which the oralists and the Neoanalysts could meet.²²

²² An earlier version of this paper was delivered as an invited lecture at the 13th FIEC Congress (Berlin 2009). I am grateful to those who attended the talk for their comments and discussion.

17 Meta-Cyclic Epic and Homeric Poetry

In recent years, scholars who sought to combine Neoanalytic *Quellenforschung* with the theory of oral composition have become aware of the fact that Homer uses epic tradition, first and foremost that represented in the poems of the Trojan Cycle, in a rather idiosyncratic way: he does not just evoke the Cycle tradition or borrows its motifs but, rather, deliberately reshapes it, making it serve his own agenda.¹ This strongly suggests that, rather than behaving as two traditional poems among many, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* claimed a special status within the tradition to which they belonged. To render this new awareness as regards the position of Homer vis-à-vis other traditional poetry, the terms ‘metaepic’ and ‘meta-cyclic’ have been proposed in scholarly literature.²

1 Homer’s Acknowledgment of the Cycle Tradition

It is generally accepted today that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* lean heavily upon the nomenclature of Trojan subjects dealt with in the poems of the Epic Cycle. The recognition of this fact has been one of the major contributions of Neoanalysis to Homeric scholarship. At the same time, this should not be taken to mean that, as the pioneers of Neoanalysis initially supposed, Homer directly addressed the very poems that were known as ‘Cyclic’ in later periods³ and that eventually formed the basis of Proclus’ summary. The sources on which Homer drew must have belonged to pre-Homeric Trojan tradition of which the poems of the Cycle were post-Homeric representatives. To quote Gregory Nagy, ‘Paradoxically the textual fixation of the Homeric poems is older than that of the Cycle ... and yet the inherited themes of the Cycle appear consistently older than those of the Homeric poems’.⁴

¹ See Finkelberg 2003, a response to the question ‘What are the most interesting new directions in oral tradition studies (with specific reference to your special field)?’, circulated among students of oral poetics by the journal *Oral Tradition*. The studies I referred to on that occasion were Slatkin 1991, Ballabriga 1998, Danek 1998, Malkin 1998 and Burgess 2001.

² Finkelberg 1998, 154–55: ‘Homer’s transformation of the traditional saga into raw material for his poems endowed the latter with the status of metaepics’; Burgess 2012, 170: ‘The Homeric poems are “meta-cyclic” in the sense that they transform cyclic motifs and phraseology into new contexts’. Cf. also above, ch. 14, 149 and ch. 16, 162–63; Burgess 2009, 4, 66; Tsagalis 2011, 218–28.

³ Κυκλικοί schol. *Il.* 3.242, 5.126, 18.486, 19.332, 23.346, 660–1, 19.326; *Od.* 11.547; cf. *scriptor Cyclicus* Hor. *Ars P.* 136.

⁴ Nagy 1990, 72; cf. M. West 2013, 17.

The range of the identifiable ‘Cyclic’ subjects to which Homer refers is quite impressive. These references may come either as direct reminiscences of Cyclic episodes (both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) or as re-enactments of events narrated in the poems of the Cycle (the *Iliad* only).

Reminiscences

Reminiscences as such are of course a widespread epic device whose range of application exceeds the story of the Trojan War.⁵ They were possibly not specific to Homer.⁶ However that may be, Homer widely uses reminiscences evoking the Cycle tradition in order to fill gaps in his own account of the Trojan War. This is most conspicuous in the case of the *Odyssey*.

Two themes stand at the centre of the *Odyssey*’s attention—the Fall of Troy, the subject of the Cyclic *Aethiopis*, *Little Iliad* and *Sack of Ilion*, and the Returns, the subject of the Cyclic *Nostoi*. The *Aethiopis* is evoked in the story about Achilles’ funeral told by Agamemnon in the Underworld; the *Little Iliad* in Odysseus’ meeting with Ajax in the Underworld described by Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11 and in the story of Odysseus’ entering Troy as a spy told by Helen in *Odyssey* 4; *Sack of Ilion* in the story of the Wooden Horse told by Menelaus in *Odyssey* 4 and by Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11; this same story is also the subject of Demodocus’ third song in *Odyssey* 8.⁷ The *Nostoi* are evoked in Nestor’s reminiscences of the aftermath of the Trojan War and his story of Agamemnon’s death in *Odyssey* 3, in Menelaus’ reminiscences in *Odyssey* 4, and in Agamemnon’s ghost’s account of his own death in *Odyssey* 11; this is also the subject of the song performed by Phemius in *Odyssey* 1.⁸ As a result, the *Odyssey*, besides being a poem of the return of the last

⁵ See, e.g., Nestor’s reminiscences of his youthful exploits (*Il.* 1.260–73, 7.132–57, 11.668–761, 23.629–43), Phoenix’s reminiscences of his past (*Il.* 9.447–95), or Eumaeus’ reminiscences of his early life (*Od.* 15.389–484).

⁶ Cf. the following passage from Proclus’ summary of the *Cypria*: ‘And Menelaus comes to Nestor. Nestor in a digression relates to him of how Epopeus, who raped the daughter of Lycurgus, had his city sacked, and the story of Oedipus, and the madness of Heracles, and the story of Theseus and Ariadne’ (*Cypr.* arg. 4 West). Although what is dealt with here are mythological paradigms rather than reminiscences proper, the episode suggests that reminiscences, including those of Nestor, might have emerged in the Cycle epics on other occasions.

⁷ Achilles’ funeral *Od.* 24.35–92, *Aeth.* arg. 4 West; Odysseus and Ajax *Od.* 11.541–64, *Aeth.* arg. 4, *L. Il.* arg. 1 West; Odysseus the spy *Od.* 4.235–64, *L. Il.* arg. 4 West; the Wooden Horse *Od.* 4.265–89; 11.504–37; 8.499–520, *L. Il.* arg. 5 West, *Sack* arg. 1 West.

⁸ Nestor *Od.* 3.103–200; 253–312; Menelaus 4.351–585; Agamemnon 11.404–34; Phemius’ song 1.325–27; *Nost.* arg. 1, 3, 5 West.

of the heroes, acts as a synopsis of the part of the Epic Cycle dealing with the final stages of the Trojan War and the fate of the survivors.

It comes as no surprise that, while the *Odyssey* reminiscences invoke the Fall of Troy and the Returns, those of the *Iliad* refer to the initial stages of the Trojan War. In *Iliad* 2 Odysseus reminds the Achaeans of the mustering of the troops at Aulis and the portent of the snake and the sparrows that accompanied it, whereas in *Iliad* 3 Antenor recalls the story of the embassy of Odysseus and Menelaus to Troy and the negotiations about the return of Helen and Menelaus' possessions, both having taken place at the very beginning of the war. Both accounts are closely paralleled in the *Cypria*.⁹ In that they refer to events that preceded the beginning of the *Iliad*, the reminiscences of Odysseus and Antenor fulfil the same function as those of Nestor and Menelaus in Books 3 and 4 of the *Odyssey*. As a result, the reminiscences produce a comprehensive picture of the Trojan War which transcends by far the scope of events that the Homeric poems were ostensibly meant to narrate.

Re-enactments

Quite a few episodes in Books 2–7 of the *Iliad*, which form a digression from the narrative sequence of the story of the Wrath of Achilles, address the beginning of the Trojan War as narrated in the Cyclic *Cypria*. The beginning of the war can be evoked in a direct reminiscence, as in Odysseus' and Antenor's reminiscences referred to above. But more frequently the *Iliad* applies a subtler strategy, in that the episodes properly belonging to the beginning of the war are incorporated into the chronological and narrative setting of its last year and become an integral part of it.¹⁰ Thus, the seduction of Helen by Paris and Aphrodite in *Iliad* 3 provides, as was aptly put by Mark Edwards, 'a re-enactment of the original seduction', the proper context of which is again the *Cypria*: 'In the meantime Aphrodite brings Helen and Alexander together. And after making love they put most of [Menelaus'] possessions on board and sail away by night.'¹¹ In a similar way, the mustering of the troops described in *Iliad* 2 or the negotiations about Helen and the building of the Achaean Wall narrated in *Iliad* 7, both properly belonging to the beginning of the war but introduced so as to suit the context of its last year,

⁹ *Il.* 2.284–332; 3. 204–24; *Cypr.* arg. 6, 10 West. See also above, ch. 14.

¹⁰ Finkelberg 1998, 142–44.

¹¹ *Cypr.* arg. 2 West; cf. Edwards 1987a, 196; Kullmann 1991, 434.

can hardly be anything else than such re-enactments of the war's initial stages, again closely paralleled in the *Cypria* account.¹²

In fact, what we have here is a narrative strategy characteristic of the *Iliad* as a whole, for in the second half of the poem the same technique of re-enactment or, to borrow Wolfgang Kullmann's expression, 'an imitation of a narrative known to us from one of the Cyclic epics', is employed.¹³ There, this strategy is used to evoke the last stages of the war which, understandably enough, could not be directly narrated in the *Iliad*. Thus, it has long been suggested that the description of the death of Patroclus and the battle over his body in Books 16 and 17 of the *Iliad* evokes the circumstances of Achilles' death as narrated in the Cyclic *Aethiopis*; again, although the lamentation of Thetis and the Nereids over Achilles in *Iliad* 18 is prompted by the death of Patroclus, it evokes Thetis' bewailing of Achilles, also narrated in the *Aethiopis*.¹⁴ Likewise, although the Fall of Troy properly belongs with the events described in the Cyclic *Sack of Ilion*, in *Iliad* 22 Priam anticipates it in all its gruesome detail, whereas the death of Hector is presented as if the city were already in flames; an additional effort to evoke the outcome of the war can be discerned in the sudden emergence of Epeius, the builder of the Wooden Horse, in the Funeral Games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23.¹⁵

Conclusions

Although the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* relate just two single episodes from the Trojan saga, owing to their recurrent use of reminiscences and re-enactments of Cyclic subjects they act as synoptic narratives embracing the entire tradition of the Trojan War and the Returns. While the literary merits of this compositional technique were commended as early as Aristotle,¹⁶ it has rarely been taken into account that what is being dealt with is far from merely a matter of composition. By isolating Cyclic episodes from their original contexts and incorporating them into the stories of Achilles' wrath and Odysseus' homecoming, Homer not simply evokes the

¹² See esp. *Cypr.* arg. 10, 12 West and ch. 14 above.

¹³ Kullmann 1984, 310.

¹⁴ *Il.* 18.22–72; *Aeth.* arg. 4 West; also evoked as a reminiscence in *Od.* 24.36–97. For a recent discussion of the *Iliad* foreshadowing of the death of Achilles see Burgess 2009, 72–92.

¹⁵ Priam's anticipation *Il.* 22.62–71, Hector's death 22.405–411; cf. *L.II.* fr. 18, 25; *Sack* arg. 2, 4 West; Epeius *Il.* 23.664–99, 838–40, *L.II.* arg. 4 West. The Funeral Games is the only occasion on which Epeius appears in the *Iliad*; in the *Odyssey*, his name emerges twice, both times in connection with the Wooden Horse (8.492–93, 11.523).

¹⁶ *Poet.* 1451a 23–30; 1459a 30–b7.

Cycle epics but also adapts them to his own narratives, thereby appropriating their contents.¹⁷

2 Homer's Disacknowledging the Cycle Tradition

Reminiscences and re-enactments are far from being Homer's only means for manipulating the Cycle tradition so as to achieve the desirable effect. To see that, we have to turn to the cases where Homer applies much more aggressive intertextual strategies, in that he discredits or deliberately ignores the tradition represented by the poems of the Cycle. I mean the so-called lying stories (the *Odyssey* only) and deliberate suppressions of subjects which are prominent in the Cycle tradition (both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*).

Lying stories

In the second half of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is frequently found engaged in telling lying stories which place either Odysseus himself or the persona that he assumes in different locations all over the Mediterranean, especially in Crete.¹⁸ It has been suggested more than once that Odysseus' lying stories in fact refer to alternative versions of Odysseus' wanderings, a hypothetical 'Cretan' *Odyssey* being the most frequently proposed candidate.¹⁹ Yet, it is a lying story that places Odysseus in the northern parts of the Greek world that offers an identifiable parallel to one of the poems of the Trojan Cycle.

According to the story that the disguised Odysseus tells first to Eumaeus and then to Penelope, upon his arrival from Troy Odysseus left his treasure in Epirus with the Thesprotian king Pheidon and went to Dodona, to ask the oracle whether

¹⁷ This is especially obvious in Homer's use of the story of Agamemnon's return, the subject of the Cyclic *Nostoi*, which acts in the *Odyssey* as a suggestive parallel running through the entire poem and thus becoming an integral part of it. Thus, Orestes' vengeance of his father's death is set as a model for Telemachus already in Book 1, whereas Clytaemnestra's perfidy is being contrasted with the virtue of Penelope up to the concluding book of the poem. On Telemachus and Orestes see *Od.* 1.293–302, 3.301–16; on Penelope and Clytaemnestra see 11.405–34 and 441–53, 24.192–202.

¹⁸ *Od.* 13.256–86, 14.192–359, 462–506, 17.415–44, 19.165–202, 221–48, 262–307, 24.302–14.

¹⁹ See esp. Reece 1994, Tsagalis 2012; cf. Marks 2003.

he should return to Ithaca openly or in secret.²⁰ Epirus, the Land of the Thesprotians, played a prominent part in the lost Cycle epics *Telegony* and *Thesprotis* (probably just a section of the former), both of which told a story of Odysseus' return that significantly differed from what we find in the main narrative of the Homeric *Odyssey*. According to Proclus' summary of the *Telegony*, after his return to Ithaca Odysseus migrated to Epirus where he married the Thesprotian queen Callidice; Apollodorus adds to this that the purpose of Odysseus' journey north was to appease Poseidon's anger, thus fulfilling the prophecy given by Tiresias in the Underworld.²¹ In other words, although the story is presented in the Homeric poem as a lie, it is in fact an alternative version of the story of Odysseus' return which is reasonably close to the one we find in the Cyclic *Telegony* and/or *Thesprotis* and to which Tiresias' prophecy probably also belonged.²² In that it does not presuppose Odysseus' eventual homecoming, this version sharply disagrees with the Homeric *Odyssey*, for which the protagonist's return to Ithaca is a *sine qua non*. As Alain Ballabriga put it, '[t]his Cyclic Odysseus places himself in opposition to the one of the *Odyssey*, who is fundamentally the man who returns to Ithaca'.²³

By the very fact of turning the Cycle version of Odysseus' wanderings into a lying story the *Odyssey* poet downgrades it and privileges the version that he offers.²⁴ It stands to reason that the same strategy was also at work in the case of those lying stories that cannot any longer be provided with identifiable traditional parallels.

Suppressions

On a number of occasions, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* can be shown to ignore themes that are prominent both in the tradition represented by the poems of the Trojan Cycle and in that associated with the name of Hesiod. This strongly speaks in favour of Homer's deliberate suppression of the themes in question.

²⁰ *Od.* 14.316–35; 19.287–302.

²¹ *Od.* 11.119–37, 23.266–84; *Teleg.* arg. 2 West; Apollod. *Epit.* 7.34. According to Tiresias' prophecy, upon his return to Ithaca Odysseus should leave it again for the country of men who 'know not the sea, neither eat meat savoured with salt'.

²² See Ballabriga 1989; Peradotto 1990, 60–76; Danek 1998, 214–20, 285–87; Malkin 1998, 120–55; Marks 2008, 100–104; Tsagalis 2011, 218, 223.

²³ Ballabriga 1989, 299; my translation.

²⁴ Cf. Danek 1998, 216.

A. The End of the Race of Heroes

According to the Cyclic *Cypria*, Hesiod's *Works and Days* and the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, the Trojan War was devised by Zeus and other gods in order to put an end to the Race of Heroes.²⁵ The overall design of the Epic Cycle, which starts with the plan of Zeus to destroy the Race of Heroes and ends with the death of the last of them, conveys the same idea. Yet, although the Homeric poems formally belong to the same tradition as the poems of the Trojan Cycle, the theme of the end of the Race of Heroes is conspicuous by its almost complete absence from them. Among those Homeric passages for which the theme in question may be considered relevant, the following three are especially noteworthy.²⁶

(a) Dios Boulē, the notorious 'plan of Zeus' referred to in the proem of the *Iliad* (1.3–5 'And it [the wrath of Achilles] threw down to Hades many mighty souls of heroes, and made them prey to dogs and all kinds of birds, and the plan of Zeus was being fulfilled') is strongly reminiscent of the same expression in the proem of the *Cypria* (fr. 1.6–7 'And the heroes were being slaughtered at Troy, and the plan of Zeus was being fulfilled'). However, the theme of the destruction of the Race of Heroes is irrelevant to the rest of the *Iliad* to such a degree that many scholars, beginning with Aristarchus, have refused to take the Iliadic expression as referring to the plan of Zeus that triggered the Trojan War.²⁷

(b) A passage in *Iliad* 12 referring to the future destruction of the Achaean Wall by Poseidon and Apollo contains the expression 'the race of demigods' (ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν). This is the only case in Homer when the heroes are called 'demigods' or referred to as a special race.²⁸ Yet the same passage states unequivocally that after the end of the war those of the Achaeans who stayed alive simply and prosaically went home.²⁹ In view of this, it is difficult not to agree with Bryan Hainsworth's comment *ad locum* that 'within his narrative Homer does not recognize them [the heroes] as a separate class of being and therefore has no use for the present term, which occurs only here in the *Iliad*'.³⁰

(c) Proteus' prophecy in *Odyssey* 4, according to which Menelaus will be taken after his death to the Elysian Field and the ends of the earth where he will enjoy a happy existence, evokes not only the Isles of the Blessed, the final abode of the heroes in Hesiod, also located at the ends of the earth, but also the White

²⁵ *Cypr.* fr. 1 Bernabé/West; Hes. *Op.* 159–73; [Hes.] fr. 204.95–105 M-W.

²⁶ Cf. above, ch. 15.

²⁷ On the discussion see, e.g., Schein 1984, 59–60, with n. 34; Kirk (1985, 53; Slatkin 1991, 118–22; M.W. Edwards 2011b.

²⁸ *Il.* 12.23. Cf. Scodel 1982, 34.

²⁹ *Il.* 12.15–16 and below, with n. 37.

³⁰ Hainsworth 1993, 320.

Island where Achilles was taken after his death in the *Aethiopis* and the island of Circe where Telemachus and Penelope were led in the *Telegony*.³¹ That is to say, in both Hesiod and the Cycle the heroes' immortalization seems to be the norm.³² Yet, when taken against the rest of Homer, whose characters invariably die ordinary deaths while their souls descend to the dreary realm of Hades, the *Odyssey* version of Menelaus' afterlife appears to be exceptional.³³

The passages adduced, as well as Homer's close acquaintance with the principal Cycle subjects as discussed above, make it highly implausible that Homer could have been unaware of such a pivotal traditional theme as the destruction of the Race of Heroes in the Trojan War. Accordingly, his failure to integrate this theme into his own story of the Trojan War can only be interpreted as due to deliberate suppression.

B. The post-war migrations

The theme of the heroes' migrations to foreign lands was prominent in the sub-genre of heroic tradition conventionally called *nostoi*.³⁴ Consider indeed the following. Diomedes left Argos and went to the Adriatic where he became the founder of numerous cities; Neoptolemus travelled by land to Epirus, where he became the founder of the royal dynasty of the Molossians; Philoctetes migrated to the region of Croton in Italy where he colonized Cape Krimissa; Idomeneus was expelled from Crete by his wife and her new consort and eventually went elsewhere, and so on.³⁵ 'The entire ethnography of the Mediterranean could be explained as originating from the Big Bang of the Trojan War and the consequent Nostos diffusion.'³⁶

31 *Od.* 4.561–5, *Hes. Op.* 167–73; cf. *Aeth.* arg. 4, *Teleg.* arg. 4 West. Cf. also [*Hes.*] fr. 204.99–103.

32 Cf. also *Aeth.* arg. 2 West: 'Then Achilles kills Memnon. And Eos, after having obtained Zeus's permission, bestows immortality on him'. See further Griffin 1977, 42–43.

33 See Griffin 1980, 167; S. West in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 227; Mackie 2011. On Homer's 'grim heroic vision of the afterlife' see also Edmonds 2011.

34 In a recent article, Anna Bonifazi (2009) has drawn attention to the fact that, as Georg Curtius pointed out as early as 1874, 'returns' would be too restrictive a rendering of the Greek *nostoi*. Namely, the evidence at our disposal strongly suggests that the word's meaning implies multi-directionality, thus embracing both homecoming and migration. This would suit much better the actual use of the word in the *nostoi* tradition.

35 Diomedes Apollod. *Epit.* 6.9–10, cf. Verg. *Aen.* 11.243–295; Neoptolemus *Nost.* arg. 4 West, Pind. *Nem.* 7, Eur. *Andr.* 1243–51, Apollod. *Epit.* 6.12–13; Philoctetes Ps.–Arist. *Mir. Ausc.* 840a15–26; Apollod. *Epit.* 6.15b; Idomeneus Apollod. *Epit.* 6.9.

36 Malkin 1998, 3; cf. Finkelberg 2005, 149–50.

Nothing of this will be found in Homer. Nestor's reminiscences in *Odyssey* 3, relating as they do to the same heroes whose *nostoi* were referred to above, are especially illuminating. According to Nestor's story, Diomedes' ships had safely landed in Argos, with no mention being made of Diomedes' subsequent movements; the northerners Neoptolemus and Philoctetes had also had a safe journey back home; finally, Idomeneus had brought all his men back to Crete.³⁷ The *Iliad*, whose subject matter has ostensibly nothing to do with *nostoi*, adopts the same strategy. Thus, in the Achaean Wall passage already discussed above, the poet makes the following general statement concerning the survivors' fate after the war: 'And the city of Priam was sacked in the tenth year, and the Argives went in their ships to their dear homeland (φιλήν ἐς πατρίδ' ἔβησαν)'.³⁸ We saw, however, that the evidence relating to the *nostoi* tradition suggests a quite different picture.

Some of the migration stories that circulated in Greek tradition might well be late, but the evidence is cumulative, the more so as we are fortunate enough to possess a piece of evidence which is supported by traditional sources and therefore can serve as an effective check.

Calchas son of Thestor, the diviner of the Achaean fleet and personally of Agamemnon, is introduced in the *Iliad* as 'the best of the augurs', who knows the past, the present and the future and whose gift of prophecy, granted by Apollo, enabled him to lead the Achaean ships to Troy. Judging by Proclus' summary, Calchas was also prominent in the Cyclic *Cypria*.³⁹ Especially noteworthy, however, is the tradition that concerns Calchas' exploits after the Trojan War. Both the Cyclic *Nostoi* and a Hesiodic poem (probably *Melampodia*) tell us that after the war Calchas, together with other Achaeans—the Lapiths Leonteus and Polypoites in the *Nostoi* and Amphilocheus son of Amphiararus in the *Melampodia*—travelled on foot to Colophon in Asia Minor; according to the *Melampodia*, Calchas died there of a broken heart after having been defeated in a competition of divination by Mopsus, the son of Manto daughter of Tiresias.⁴⁰ Both sources are

37 Diomedes *Od.* 3.180–2, cf. *Nost.* arg. 1 West; Neoptolemus *Od.* 3.188–89, cf. 4.5–9; Philoctetes 3.190; Idomeneus 3.191. On the partiality of Nestor's account of the homecomings of Diomedes, Neoptolemus and Idomeneus see also Marks 2008, 127–29.

38 *Il.* 12.15–16.

39 *Il.* 1.71–72; cf. 2.299–330. According to Proclus' summary, the *Cypria* (arg. 6–8 West) included three episodes in which Calchas was actively involved: the portent of the snake and the sparrows that the Achaeans witnessed at Aulis (evoked also in *Iliad* 2, see above); the story of Telephus; and the sacrifice of Iphigenia (not mentioned in Homer). I discuss the Calchas case in detail in ch. 16.

40 *Nost.* arg. 2 West (probably also describing Calchas' death, see West *ad loc.*); [Hes.] fr. 278 M–W, cf. fr. 279. This account was also known to Callinus and Sophocles and, in a slightly different

traditional, and both are sharply at variance with what we find in Homer. In the *Iliad*, Calchas is consistently presented as a humble and obedient servant of Agamemnon, a far cry indeed from the Cyclic and Hesiodic Calchas, who leads the survivors of the Trojan War to new places of settlement in Asia Minor. As far as I can see, the fact that here, as with the end of the Race of Heroes, the Cycle and the Hesiodic tradition coincide over the head of Homer indicates that they re-present the traditional version of Calchas' story which Homer suppresses.

Conclusions

As distinct from the explicit references to Cyclic subjects, where the intertextual relationship can in principle work both ways,⁴¹ the lying stories and suppressions are one-sided by definition and therefore heavily marked. This is especially true of suppressions. To paraphrase Ken Dowden, by the very fact of refusing reference to a given subject Homer makes the reference.⁴² That is to say, when suppressing traditional subjects of the end of the Race of Heroes and post-war migrations or marking them as false, Homer makes a statement of some kind. To inquire into the nature of this statement is our next task.

3 Meta-Cyclic Epic

Whether acknowledging the Cycle tradition and making it part of his own narrative or disacknowledging and tampering with it, Homer addresses the Cycle systematically and in its entirety. This becomes especially obvious if we approach the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* not as two isolated fragments of a grand narrative of the Trojan War but, rather, as two mutually complementary parts of a single whole.

version, to Pherecydes of Athens (Callin. fr. [8] W; Soph. fr. 181 Nauck; Pherecyd. fr. 142 Fowler; cf. Apollod. *Epit.* 6.2–4). An additional and probably competing version, which involved Mopsus' mother Manto but apparently did not mention Calchas, is found in a fragment from the *Epigoni*, a traditional poem belonging to the Theban Cycle (*Epig.* fr. 4 West). According to yet another version, preserved by Herodotus, Calchas did not die at Colophon but travelled farther east, eventually to become, together with Amphilochus, the ancestor of the Pamphylians (Hdt. 7.91; quoted in Strab. 14.4.3; see also Sophocles *apud* Strab. 14.5.16). Calchas was also credited with founding Selge in Pisidia (Strab. 12.7.3)

⁴¹ Cf. ch. 16, 166.

⁴² Dowden 1996, 53.

The Trojan Cycle starts with the decision of Zeus to annihilate the Race of Heroes and ends with the death of Odysseus and transportation of Telemachus and Penelope to the island of Circe, followed by their immortalization. Thus, the very design of the Cycle, from the beginning of the *Cypria* to the end of the *Telegony*, conveys the idea of the end of the Race of Heroes. The famous passage in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, according to which those of the heroes who did not fall at Troy were transported to the Isles of the Blessed at the end of the earth (above), shows clearly enough that this was also the scheme that Hesiod had in mind. It can hardly be due to mere chance that in making the *Iliad*, a poem about the Trojan War, be continued with the *Odyssey*, a poem about the Returns, the Homeric tradition follows the same pattern. That is to say, rather than introducing two separate episodes from the Trojan Cycle, Homer offers a full-scale alternative to the Cycle as a whole—an alternative which, however, suppresses the theme of the end of the Race of Heroes, the Cycle's very *raison d'être*. The question is of course what is offered instead.

In Hesiod, the myth of the end of the Race of Heroes is part of a larger teleological scheme according to which the history of mankind is a process of gradual degeneration from the Race of Gold, which flourished at the dawn of humanity, to the Race of Iron, which stands for man's present condition. Needless to say, such an attitude to the past implies a distinctly negative view of the present, and Hesiod's unflattering characterization of the Race of Iron that has replaced the Race of Heroes makes it especially manifest.⁴³ But the same attitude can also be discerned in the dark prophecies that conclude the description of the end of the Race of Heroes in the *Catalogue of Women*, and the poet of the *Cypria*, in that he presents Helen as the daughter of Nemesis, clearly shares the same pessimistic vision.⁴⁴ Conversely, Homer's suppression of the theme of the end of the Race of Heroes establishes a continuity between Greece of the Heroic Age and historic Greece, thus changing the pessimistic view of the present characteristic of other traditional poetry.⁴⁵

This move is closely linked with Homer's treatment of another theme that is shared by Hesiod and the Cycle but is conspicuous by its absence in Homer, that of the heroes' posthumous immortalization. Again, nothing can be more alien to the spirit of the Homeric poems. As Jasper Griffin put it, 'This is what makes the *Iliad* both true and tragic, and the very different procedure of the Cycle indicates

⁴³ *Op.* 174–78, quoted above, p. 155.

⁴⁴ [Hes.] fr. 204.102–17 M-W; *Cypr.* fr. 10.2, 11 West.

⁴⁵ See above, ch. 15. Cf. Scodel 1982, 35: 'In Homer, the continuity of history from the heroes to the poet's contemporaries is complete'.

profoundly different attitudes to the fundamental nature of human life and death, and consequently to human heroism and the relation of men to the gods'.⁴⁶ At the same time, there is good reason to suppose that what we encounter here is much more than just two different attitudes. I can hardly improve on Laura Slatkin's assessment:

Yet the Homeric poems ... are interpreters of their mythological resources at every step; and 'destruction' as understood by the traditions represented by Hesiod, the Cycle, and Mesopotamian literature has been reinterpreted by the *Iliad* and translated into its own terms. The *Iliad* evokes these traditions, through passages that retrieve the theme of destruction, to place them ultimately in a perspective that, much as it rejects immortality, rejects utter annihilation as well. Components of the mythological complex of the end of the race survive in Iliadic allusions, and reverberate, but are transformed.⁴⁷

As a result, the theme of immortality, ubiquitous in both the Cycle and Hesiodic tradition, is transformed in Homer into one of 'heroic experience as a metaphor for the condition of mortality, with all its contradictions'.⁴⁸ All this strongly suggests that the suppression of the traditional theme of the end of the Race of Heroes is essential to the concept of the Heroic Age that Homer promulgates.

The same would be true of another theme which is prominent in the Cycle but ignored by Homer, that of the heroes' post-war migrations. Note that the aftermath of the Trojan War, the Returns, is just as indispensable to the myth of the end of the Race of Heroes as the story of the war proper. The two events are inextricably linked in that, rather than returning home, most heroes who survived the war went elsewhere, eventually to disappear from the view. Yet, as we saw in the previous section, Homer either suppresses the migration theme or transforms it into that of homecoming; in a similar way, he rejects the traditions of Odysseus' settling in foreign lands, the hero's return to Ithaca being presented by him as the only option to be taken into account.

The continuity between the heroic past and the present rather than historical discontinuity; the heroes' humanization through mortality rather than their posthumous immortalization; Greece as the heroes' only destination rather than their migrations to foreign lands—these are, then, the main revisions undergone by the Cycle tradition in the hands of Homer. While it is difficult to say with certainty what concrete historic circumstances could trigger this total restructuring of the Trojan tradition, we can be sure of one thing: when taken together, the revisions

⁴⁶ Griffin 1977, 43.

⁴⁷ Slatkin 1991, 121–22.

⁴⁸ Slatkin 1991, 39.

in question transpire as different aspects of one and the same project, a project whose objective was not so much the commemoration of the past as, rather, the establishment of usable ideological foundations for the present and the future.⁴⁹

Judging by the evidence at our disposal, the Trojan Cycle was the only epic tradition treated by Homer in this manner. Much as Homer was aware of other epic traditions, such as the Heracles saga, the Argonauts, or the Theban Cycle, all of them frequently evoked in his poems, this awareness cannot equal the total engagement that we have observed in both his accepting the Cycle tradition and rejecting it. Homer does not simply appropriate the other versions of the Trojan saga or challenges their authority: he absorbs the Cycle tradition with the purpose to supersede it. It goes without saying that a text that stands in this kind of relation to the other texts treating the same subject can no longer be regarded as just one traditional variant among many. Rather, this would be a text which deliberately positions itself beyond the tradition to which it ostensibly belongs.⁵⁰

49 To my mind, the Cycle emphasis on the Heroic Age, on posthumous immortalization and on migrations suggests the 'Eighth-Century Renaissance', hero-cult and the colonization movement, respectively, all of the three pointing to the early archaic period; this would also agree with the evidence of vase-painting (on the latter see esp. Burgess 2001, 53–114 and 2011). In that case, Homer's reaction to the Cycle must be late archaic. This would concur in general outline with the model, first introduced by Gregory Nagy, according to which the Cycle and Homer represent two successive stages of Panhellenism, see Nagy 1990, 70–79: this model has been effectively taken further in Tsagalis 2011, 217–18, 236–37. See also below, ch. 18, 193–95 and ch. 27, 318–20.

50 The implications of this conclusion from the standpoint of oral-formulaic theory are discussed in ch. 16.

18 The Formation of the Homeric Epics

Introduction

In the late antique commentary on *The Art of Grammar* by the second-century BCE scholar Dionysius Thrax, we find:

They say that once upon a time Homer's poems were lost—either in fire or because of the influx of water or as a result of an earthquake. And after the scrolls had been scattered in many directions and become extinct, it turned out that one person happened to keep a hundred Homeric verses, another a thousand, yet another two hundreds, and someone else as much as he happened to have. Being in a state such as this, Homer's poetry was about to sink into oblivion. Yet Pisistratus, an Athenian leader, wishing both to acquire fame for himself and to restore the poems of Homer, initiated the following. He announced through the whole of Greece that those who have Homeric verses should bring them to him, a fixed price having been established for each verse. ... And after having collected all the verses he summoned seventy-two learned men, in order that each of them should independently assemble the Homeric poems in the way that seems best to him. ... And when each of them assembled the poems according to his best judgement, he convened all the said learned men in one place etc.¹

This is a late antique resonance of the centuries-long tradition, first attested in the fourth century BCE, about the so-called Pisistratean Recension.² According to the tradition in question, the sixth-century BCE Athenian ruler Pisistratus or (more likely) his son and successor Hipparchus or even the early sixth-century Athenian statesman Solon initiated the establishment of the standard text of the Homeric poems for the sake of their performance at the recently introduced Pan-athenaic festival. As the passage adduced above demonstrates, the story was eventually cast after a popular narrative pattern designed to account for the standardization of a canonical text: thus, a remarkably similar story concerning the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek appears in the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*.³ Fictional as it certainly is, the story neatly encapsulates two essential points concerning Homer: (a) the canonical status of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

1 Schol. Dion. Thrax. *Commentarius Melampodis seu Diomedis* (cod. C), ed. A. Hilgard, pp. 29–30 (my translation). See further Wyrick 2004, 205–20.

2 For a detailed account of the sources see Andersen 2011 and below, ch. 25, 300–304; cf. ch. 31.

3 On the narrative patterns employed in the *Letter of Aristeas* see Honigman 2003, 41–49. While she draws illuminating parallels between this document and the treatment of Homer by the scholars of Hellenistic Alexandria, Honigman makes no use of later sources, such as the scholia on Dionysius Thrax quoted above. On the latter see esp. Wyrick 2004.

and (b) the important role that the sixth-century BCE Athens played in the poems' transmission.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, two epics about the Trojan War, are the earliest literary texts in the Western tradition. The Greeks believed they were authored by Homer, a blind bard who lived in one of the Ionian Greek cities along the Aegean coast of Asia Minor (today, western Turkey) several generations after the events he described. Since the late archaic period (6th century BCE), the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were regularly recited at religious and civic events all over the Greek world, memorized by generations of schoolchildren, and reproduced in numerous copies. Up to the fall of the Byzantine empire (15th century CE), they acted as the cornerstone of Greek education (*paideia*) and a generally recognized hallmark of Greek identity.⁴

A mere outline of the plots of the Homeric epics can hardly reveal their monumental stature. The recital of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* took days, and their printed versions are spread over hundreds of pages. Nevertheless, the plot of each of the poems can be summarized in just a few sentences.

The action of the *Iliad* is set in the tenth year of the Trojan War, whose overall story is taken for granted (see below, on the Epic Cycle). As a result of a quarrel between Agamemnon, the commander-in-chief of the Greek army that has been besieging Troy for ten years, and Achilles, the best of the Achaean (= Greek) warriors, Achilles withdraws from the battle. The Trojan military leader Hector, the eldest son of the king Priam, uses the absence of Achilles to lead his army out of the city wall in order to attack the Achaean camp. Due to the promise that Zeus gave to Achilles' mother, the sea-goddess Thetis, the Trojans enjoy a temporary success. Hector leads a victorious attack and approaches the Achaean ships. Achilles allows his comrade Patroclus to lead a counterattack in his stead. After the death of Patroclus at the hands of Hector, Achilles returns to the battlefield, defeats the Trojan army and kills Hector in a single combat.

The *Odyssey* narrative begins ten years after the fall of Troy. Again, the overall story of the Trojan War is taken for granted. The poem tells about the wanderings of Odysseus, one of the Achaean leaders in the war, and his eventual return to his native Ithaca, a small island opposite the northwestern coast of mainland Greece. After having visited many fabulous lands and peoples and having spent time in the company of goddesses, kings and monsters, Odysseus comes home in disguise, only to find out that his country is immersed into anarchy and his house occupied by the suitors of his faithful wife Penelope. The suitors destroy Odysseus' wealth, undermine the authority of his young son Telemachus and make

⁴ See further below, chs. 27 and 30.

plans to assassinate the prince. With the assistance of the goddess Athena, Odysseus and Telemachus kill the suitors. Odysseus reunites with Penelope and restores his authority over Ithaca.

Homer elaborated these relatively simple plots in various ways. He added digressions and secondary episodes, introduced extended descriptions, catalogues, reminiscences, similes and parables, developed the characters and presented their motives in long speeches. This made the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into monumental epics and, eventually, into what was aptly defined by Eric Havelock as ‘the tribal encyclopedia’ of ancient Greece. Their origins, however, have remained shrouded in mystery, posing a perpetual challenge to generations of scholars both ancient and modern.

Part 1. Recovering the ‘True Homer’

From Alexandria to the Mid-Twentieth Century

The inquiry into the text of the Homeric poems started already in the fifth century BCE, and it reached its highest point in the third and second centuries, in Ptolemaic Alexandria. The Alexandrian scholars saw their task in restoration of the original text of Homer, whom they saw as an individual poet who composed his poems in writing. Zenodotus of Ephesus, Aristophanes of Byzantium, Aristarchus of Samothrace and other representatives of the Alexandrian school developed methods of textual criticism and analysis and introduced criteria allowing to judge whether or not a given word, phrase or passage should be considered authentic. They also produced the first scholarly editions of Homer and wrote commentaries on the Homeric poems. The Alexandrian practice of philological inquiry continued through the Roman and Byzantine periods, and it was given new life in the Renaissance era. Here too, Homer was approached as an individual poet whose manner of composition did not differ essentially from that of Virgil or Ariosto.

A paradigm shift occurred in the eighteenth century, and it was closely associated with the rise of historical method in the humanities. Between *Conjectures académiques ou Dissertation sur l’Iliade* (ca. 1670) by François d’Aubignac (1604–1676), the first to make the claim that Homer the man never existed and the poems ascribed to him were nothing more than collections of primitive lays, and the *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (1767) by the British diplomat and traveller Robert Wood (1717–1771), the first to argue that Homer was an oral rather than a literate poet, lies a century that radically transformed the perception of the Ho-

meric epics.⁵ This change of attitude found its expression in the writings of Richard Bentley (1662–1742), Giambattista Vico (1688–1744), Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), and others. But it was not until the appearance, in 1795, of the *Prolegomena ad Homerum* by Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) that the idea that the poems of Homer hold a special status, not identical to that of literary epics, was articulated as a full-fledged scholarly hypothesis.

Wolf made explicit the view of Homer that had been steadily gaining in popularity in the course of the eighteenth century. He was also the first to make use of the recently published marginal notes (scholia) on Homer, which preserved much of the Alexandrians' textual criticism. Proceeding from Wood's insight as regards oral Homer, Wolf re-assessed ancient evidence relating to the poet and his age and stated unequivocally that both Homer and Hesiod 'were not writers but singers'.⁶ Especially significant was his observation that, since the Phoenician alphabet was introduced to Greece not earlier than the eighth century BCE, whereas the events described in the Homeric poems could not have taken place later than the eleventh century, the Homeric poems were the outcome of centuries of oral tradition rather than the creation of a single poet.

According to Wolf, the main vehicle of transmission of the early lays out of which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* grew out had been that of memorization.⁷ Wolf questioned the unity of the Homeric poems, highly praised by Aristotle in the *Poetics*.⁸ He claimed that, in so far as such a unity does exist, it was superimposed by the editor, or editors, who were thereby responsible for the final form taken by the poems. Having adopted the tradition of the Pisistratean Recension (above), he placed the textualization of the Homeric poems in the sixth century BCE. Hereafter, the problem of the identity of the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the time of their composition has become known as the 'Homeric Question'.

In the course of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, the Homeric scholars found themselves divided into two camps: the Analysts, who followed Wolf in defending the idea of multiple authorship, and the Unitarians, who argued in favour of a single author.⁹ While the Analysts dissected Homer's text in the light of numerous contradictions it contained, the Unitarians tried to explain these contradictions away. Over the years, however, the gap between the

⁵ See also below, ch. 30, 362–64.

⁶ Wolf 1985, 92.

⁷ Wolf 1985, 108–13.

⁸ On this subject see esp. Latacz 1991.

⁹ See further M. West 2011a and 2011b.

two camps shrank considerably.¹⁰ Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, the Analysts did not any longer unreservedly deny the compositional unity of the Homeric poems but, rather, focused on the identification of the stages that had led to it. The Unitarians, in their turn, while still proceeding from the idea of a single poet, were now inclined to accept the view that there had been more than one stage in the formation of the Homeric epics.

Both the Analysts and the Unitarians took it for granted that the true history of the Homeric poems and Greek epic poetry in general started with the fixation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in writing. All other poetry had been held to appear after Homer and therefore to be derivative by definition. This picture began to disintegrate towards the middle of the twentieth century, with the emergence of two trends that eventually made the pursuits of the nineteenth-century Homeric scholarship obsolete.

From the Mid-Twentieth Century to the Present: Oral-Formulaic Theory and Neoanalysis

Although developed independently of each other, Oral-Formulaic Theory and Neoanalysis have shown, each in its own way, that the Homeric poems were part of a rich epic tradition, so that it would be historically and methodologically untenable to take them in isolation from their original milieu.¹¹

The view of the Homeric poems that is generally held today is that they are representatives of oral tradition possessed of poetic style and compositional techniques significantly different from those of literary poetry. We owe this awareness to the work of the American classicist Milman Parry (1902–1935). Parry proceeded from the observation, first made by Heinrich Düntzer (1813–1901), that for each Homeric idea that is repeated many times, such as the name of a god or a hero or the description of a standard action, there is a single fixed expression fitting each main segment of the hexameter verse. These repeated expressions are ‘formulae’. Parry also showed that, alongside the formulae, there is also a great number of the so-called formulaic expressions: these are created by analogy with the formulae and are purported to adapt the fixed formulaic idiom to varying narrative contexts. Furthermore, the Homeric formulae are organized into systems, namely, groups of expressions of varying metrical shape specialized for rendering a given

¹⁰ Cf. Dodds 1954, 11–12.

¹¹ See above, ch. 16.

idea under various metrical conditions. The systems are characterized by extension and economy, which allow the poet to express a given typical idea practically in any part of the verse while tending to keep only one formula for each metrical position.¹²

As a result of the comparative study of Homer on the one hand and Apollonius Rhodius and Virgil on the other, Parry showed that, although these later hexameter poets could also employ fixed expressions, the phenomenon of formulaic systems with the economy and extension involved was altogether alien to them. His conclusion was that Homeric poetry is a special kind of poetry. Inspired by Antoine Meillet's reaction to his early work, he speculated that, in so far as the Homeric formulae are the units out of which the epic song is built, the reason why the traditional poets used these fixed expressions was the need to extemporize their songs at the time of performance.

Parry's conclusion thus revived the original hypothesis of Wood and Wolf. As James P. Holoka put it, 'Milman Parry's goal had been F.A. Wolf's—to recapture the true mode of existence of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Wolf had postulated the oral genesis of Homeric poetry; Parry brought home implacably the full implication of oral provenance'.¹³ As distinct from Wolf, however, Parry maintained that, rather than being transmitted by means of memorization, the Homeric poems were each time created anew out of the stock of traditional expressions at the poet's disposal. To verify this hypothesis, he led an ethnographic expedition into remote parts of the former Yugoslavia, where illiterate singers still performed epic songs before traditional audience. As a result of this pioneering enterprise, Oral-Formulaic Theory was born.

The theory reached its highest point in 1960, with the appearance of *The Singer of Tales* by Parry's disciple and collaborator Albert B. Lord (1912-1991). Lord's book, which resulted from field research in the oral tradition that was still alive in the former Yugoslavia, is generally recognized today as the cornerstone of the comparative study of traditional poetry. Lord has shown that the formulae, important as they are, form only one aspect of oral composition, for the poet has also to take care of the narrative aspects of his performance. The oral poet not only produces his phrases out of traditional expressions at his disposal but also relates his stories with the assistance of recurrent themes that spring to his mind whenever a given traditional subject emerges in the narrative. For example, each event of significance is introduced by an assembly, each single combat is preceded by a description of the hero's armour, and so on. Just as the formula is the

¹² See further above, chs. 6 and 9.

¹³ Holoka 1991, 462.

basic unit of the traditional poet's diction, so also the 'theme' is the basic unit of his narrative. By means of the themes the poet develops the nuclear subjects at his disposal and creates complex and detailed narratives of his own.¹⁴

Lord also addressed the pivotal question of the fixation of the Homeric poems in writing. It is indeed reasonable to suppose that oral poets, who could not write nor even possessed the idea of a fixed text, could hardly have written down their songs themselves or have initiated this enterprise. Who, then, was responsible for the fixation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in writing and how did this process proceed? The theory that is largely accepted today is Lord's theory of 'oral dictated texts'. According to this theory, the poets performed their songs before a scribe who was recording them at the time of performance; Lord demonstrated the particulars of this process by using Southslavic parallels.¹⁵ Parry's studies of Homeric diction and Lord's studies of traditional narrative are generally regarded today as two mutually complementary parts of a single scholarly hypothesis, the Parry-Lord hypothesis of oral-formulaic composition.

Almost immediately upon its appearance, Oral-Formulaic Theory came to occupy a dominant position in the Homeric studies, at least in the Anglophone scholarship. As distinct from this, the spread of Neoanalysis was rather slow. The initial work, done by J.T. Kakridis, H. Pestalozzi, and W. Schadewaldt in the 1940s and the early 1950s, can hardly account for the current prominence of the trend. The turning point came with the publication of *Die Quellen der Ilias* by Wolfgang Kullmann, which appeared in the same year as Lord's *The Singer of Tales*. While the pioneers of the Neoanalysis had mostly focused on the putative influence of the Cyclic *Aethiopis* on the Homeric *Iliad*, Kullmann's comprehensive study opened the so-called Epic Cycle in its entirety to a new kind of treatment.¹⁶

The Homeric epics represent only a fraction of the tradition of the Trojan War. The full account of the war was to be found in a group of traditional poems which, taken together, followed its story from the beginning to the end: the *Cypria*, the *Aethiopis*, the *Little Iliad*, the *Sack of Troy*, the *Returns*, and the *Telegony*. They tell the story of a great war triggered by the elopement of Helen, queen of Sparta, by Paris, son of the king of Troy. Warrior kings from all over the Greek world took part in the war, which lasted ten years. Many of them lost their lives at Troy, whereas the survivors dispersed over 'the ends of the earth', never to be seen

¹⁴ First formulated in Lord 1951; see further above, ch. 12, 121–25.

¹⁵ Lord 1953. See also Janko 1998; Jensen 2011, 281–328; Ready 2015.

¹⁶ On the history of Neoanalysis see, e.g., Willcock 1997, M.W. Edwards 2011a; on the *Iliad* and the *Aethiopis* see Rengakos 2015, 315–17.

again. The Trojan War put an end to the Race of Heroes, mortal descendants of gods.

At an early stage, it had been taken for granted that all traditional poems about the Trojan War were authored by ‘Homer’. Yet, in the course of time only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* came to be regarded as genuinely Homeric whereas the other Trojan epics were attributed to other poets and subsumed under the so-called Epic Cycle. It goes without saying that the fragments of the Cycle poems that we have today are later than the poems of Homer. This does not mean, however, that, as was once supposed, Homer was unaware of their contents. Since the emergence of Neanalysis, more and more scholars have been prepared to entertain the possibility that in everything concerning the general picture of the Trojan War the Homeric poems presuppose the tradition represented in the poems of the Cycle rather than vice versa. That is to say, the sources on which Homer drew belonged to a pre-Homeric Trojan tradition of which the poems of the Cycle were post-Homeric representatives.¹⁷ Let us try to correlate this conclusion with the historical backgrounds available to us.

Part 2. Homer’s Historical Backgrounds

Homeric amalgam

A mixture of the old and the new is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of Homeric poetry. Homer’s language is a prime example. This is a language that no one ever spoke, a *Kunstsprache* formed by a mixture of early and late linguistic features belonging to several distinct idioms.

To begin with, there is a thin layer of the *Attic* dialect. Attic forms emerge in those parts of the text that are considered more recent and less formulaic, first and foremost in speeches and similes. It is generally agreed that the presence of the Attic layer in Homeric diction is due to the fact that Athens was the last stage in the transmission of the Homeric poems that preceded the standardization of their text (more below).

The dominant dialect of Greek epic poetry is however *Ionic*. It is evenly represented in every part of Homeric diction, in both speeches and the main narrative, in both the formulaic and the nonformulaic expressions. The Ionic dialect was spoken in Greek settlements in Asia Minor founded by the waves of migration

¹⁷ See Kullmann 1984, 309; Nagy 1990, 72; M. West 2013, 17, and above, chs. 16 and 17.

that took place after the collapse of Mycenaean Greece—Ephesus, Miletus, the islands Chios and Samos, and others. The position of the Ionic dialect as the main dialect of Greek epic diction corroborates the ancient tradition of Homer's Ionian origins.

Furthermore, there is also a clearly discernible *Aeolic* layer. It is found in abundance in the formulae, which represent the conservative part of Homer's diction. Aeolic was the dialect of Greek settlements along the northern coast of Asia Minor, including Lesbos and the Troad. Since the Aeolian colonization presumably preceded that of the Ionians and since the Aeolic forms are much less prominent in the epics, it has been supposed that the Aeolic layer preceded the Ionic one and that the poetic tradition of the Trojan War had moved south from the Aeolic area, the place of the events described, to the area inhabited by the Ionians. The retention of numerous Aeolic forms in the epics whose principal idiom is Ionic must have been due to the conservative influence of the metre.¹⁸

There is no conclusive evidence that Homer's language preserves linguistic features that belong to the *Mycenaean* dialect as attested in Linear B tablets, but it is reasonable to suppose that Greek epic tradition originated before the waves of migration to Asia Minor and perhaps even predated Mycenaean Greece. However that may be, the very texture of Homer's language testifies to the fact that its origins should be traced back to much earlier periods than the one to which Homer himself belonged. In this, as in many other respects, Homer's poetry resembles an archaeological site whose successive strata gradually lead us from the most recent periods to the earliest ones, which lie deep under the surface. Thus, as A.M. Snodgrass famously argued, the contradictions in Homer's depiction of social institutions cannot be resolved and should be interpreted to the effect that, rather than reflecting a concrete historical society, the Homeric poems offer an amalgam created as a result of centuries-long circulation in oral tradition. The same would be true of Homer's picture of warfare, values, marriage customs and religious beliefs.¹⁹

¹⁸ On the so-called Aeolic phase in Homeric diction see Haug 2011 (with bibliography); Nagy 2009, II§§275–78.

¹⁹ Snodgrass 1974 and below, ch. 23; on weapons see Gray 1947; on death and afterlife see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, 12–13, 73–76, 89–92; on marriage customs and values see below, chs. 19 and 22.

Homer and the Archaic Age

To the extent that the Homeric epics allow for reconstruction of a consistent social picture, this picture points in the direction of the Archaic Age, the time of the poet himself. This goes well with recent historical, archaeological and philological assessments concerning the relevance for Homer of such signal characteristics of archaic Greece as the polis, the open-air temple, hoplite tactics, and more.²⁰ As a result, the majority of scholars tend to see the early Archaic Age (ca. 750 – ca. 600 BCE) as providing the most likely historical background for Homer, whereas some would place him even later, in the sixth century (see below).

Although it is reasonable to suppose that the origins of Greek epic tradition go back to the aftermath of the Bronze Age, the time of the events that this tradition purported to commemorate, everything points in the direction that it rose to the Panhellenic circulation in the eighth century BCE. This was a period of great transformations in the Greek world. The abolishment of kingship and establishment of the new polity of the city-state; the adoption of the self-identification ‘Hellenes’; the introduction of the new pantheon common to all Greeks; the institution of the Panhellenic cult of Zeus at Olympia; the introduction of the free-standing temple with the cult statue of an Olympian deity within it; the institution of the hero-cult; the adoption and adaptation of the West Semitic alphabet; the colonization movement—all these occurred simultaneously with the spreading of epic songs about the Trojan War all over the Greek world.

The common denominator of the historical developments that culminated in the so-called eighth-century Renaissance²¹ was the consolidation of collective identity. It should be taken into account in this connection that, as a result of the population movements that shook the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the second millennium BCE, the ethnic composition of the population groups that found themselves on the territory of Greece at the beginning of the first millennium was markedly heterogeneous.²² After the collapse of Mycenaean Greece large parts of its population abandoned Greek soil and settled in new places all over the Mediterranean, first and foremost in Asia Minor. Their lands were occupied by population groups that arrived from northern parts of the Balkan Peninsula. The newcomers from the north, most (but by no means all) of them of Dorian

²⁰ For an authoritative overview, see van Wees 2011; for a discussion of Homer’s historical background see below, ch 23.

²¹ See further below, ch. 24.

²² See Finkelberg 2005, 161–76 and below, ch. 24.

origin, settled side-by-side with what was left of the Mycenaean population and created new political entities.

As a result, the population groups that inhabited Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE sharply differed in their history, traditions and customs. Yet, the common geographical space and the common language they spoke formed a suitable background for consolidation of a new collective identity shared by all the inhabitants of Iron Age Greece and the Aegean. Three factors were central to this process. First, the new self-identification ‘Hellenes’ granted a common identity to the entire population of Greece. No less important, the newly established Olympian pantheon united various local deities into a single patriarchal family presided by Zeus. The third uniting factor, which also emerged in the eighth century, was the establishment of a generally agreed-upon picture of the common past. Regardless of the fact that many population groups inhabiting Early Iron Age Greece were newcomers and therefore strangers to the Bronze Age Greek civilization, they strove to appropriate its legacy and to make its traditions, still alive and well among the remnants of the indigenous population, their own. This resulted in the emergence of an image of the past shared by all the inhabitants of Iron Age Greece. Epic poetry became the main vehicle of spreading this new image all over the Greek world.

The uniting factors mentioned above—the common identity, the Panhellenic pantheon, the common past—were the focus of two poetic traditions that rose to the Panhellenic circulation in the eighth century BCE. While the consolidation of collective identity by means of a Panhellenic genealogy and the establishing of the status of Zeus as the supreme god of the Olympian pantheon were the main subjects of the epic tradition represented by Hesiod, the tradition associated with the name of Homer took these things for granted. The main contribution of the Homeric tradition was the shaping of collective memory. It presented all the constituents of historic Greece as having taken part in a common military enterprise that marked the end of an era—the Trojan War, which led to the destruction of the Race of Heroes. Thus, despite the late arrival of the Dorians and other northern tribes, the mainstream epic tradition made it possible for their descendants to locate themselves on the map of legendary Greece and to appropriate its heroes.

There can be little doubt that the myth of the end of the Race of Heroes purported to commemorate the collapse of Mycenaean Greece. Interestingly, however, the event that, according to the epic tradition, brought about this disaster was not the fall of Mycenae or any other major city of mainland Greece but the

ten-year siege of Troy, a non-Greek city on the other side of the Aegean.²³ It goes without saying that, whatever the nature of the events underlying the Trojan saga, they cannot account for the destruction levels and depopulation in mainland Greece or for the massive migration of its population to Asia Minor.²⁴ The mainstream Greek tradition chose to replace the momentous events that had brought about the end of the Mycenaean civilization with the story of a war against the common enemy fought on foreign soil—a mythological construction that was apparently considered as offering a more satisfactory explanation of the transition of Greece from prehistory to history. The traditional epic poems that referred to these events were effectively marginalized.²⁵

Homer and pre-Homeric tradition

The above assessment equally applies to all epic poetry about the Trojan War. Yet, Homer's position within this corpus is a special one. Although both the Homeric poems and the poems of the Epic Cycle are engaged in telling the story of the Trojan War, the relationship between them is far from being one of reciprocity. In recent years scholars who sought to combine Neoanalytic *Quellenforschung* with the theory of oral composition have become aware of the fact that Homer uses the tradition represented in the poems of the Trojan Cycle in a rather idiosyncratic way. By means of subtle strategies of inclusion and exclusion he does not just evoke the Cycle tradition or borrows its motifs but, rather, deliberately reshapes it, making it serve his own agenda. This strongly suggests that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* aspired to absorb the tradition that preceded them and, eventually, to supersede it. This is best demonstrated by Homer's failure to integrate the myth about the end of the Race of Heroes into his own picture of the Trojan War.

In view of Homer's close acquaintance with the main subjects of the Trojan Cycle as shown by Neoanalysis, it is highly unlikely that he could have had no knowledge of such a pivotal traditional subject as the destruction of the Race of Heroes in the Trojan War. Accordingly, his failure to explicitly mention it makes his silence heavily marked. As I argued elsewhere, everything points in the direction that Homer's suppression of the theme of the end of Heroes was purported

²³ Judging by Hesiod's *Works and Days* (161–63), the epics of the Theban Cycle can be seen as an attempt at presenting the end of Heroes as having issued from a war fought on Greek soil. This tendency, however, was marginalized by Homer and the Trojan tradition.

²⁴ Both are treated in detail below, ch. 24.

²⁵ See ch. 27, 320–21.

to establish a continuity between Greece of the Heroic Age and historic Greece, thus reversing the pessimistic view of the present characteristic of other traditional poetry.²⁶ This move is closely connected with Homer's failure to mention another theme that is ubiquitous in other epic poetry, that of the Heroes' posthumous immortalization. In Hesiod and the Cycle the immortalization seems to be the norm. Again, this contrasts sharply with what we find in Homer, whose people invariably die ordinary deaths. An additional theme that is prominent in Hesiod and the Cycle but is practically ignored by Homer is that of the Heroes' post-war migrations. The migrations were the central subject of a sub-genre of heroic poetry conventionally called *nostoi*, and both the Hesiodic tradition and the poems of the Cycle abound with the stories of Heroes' diffusion over the Mediterranean. Again, nothing of this will be found in Homer.²⁷

But probably the most telling case is that of Odysseus. It is difficult to avoid the impression that the fabulous lands where Odysseus is being tempted to stay for the rest of his life—the islands of Calypso, of Circe, the lands of the Phaeacians and the Lotus-Eaters—are variations on the theme of the 'Isles of the Blessed' at 'the ends of the earth', the happy abode of the Heroes in Hesiod and the Cycle. Yet, all these temptations, including immortality itself, are emphatically rejected by the *Odyssey* protagonist.

Continuity with the heroic past rather than historical discontinuity; the Heroes' humanization through mortality rather than their posthumous immortalization; Greece as the Heroes' only destination rather than their migrations to foreign lands—these are, then, the main revisions undergone by the tradition of the end of Heroes in the hands of Homer. When taken together, these revisions transpire as aspects of one and the same project, whose objective was not so much glorification of the past as, rather, the establishment of usable ideological foundations for the present and the future.

We should, therefore, speak of two stages of Greek epic tradition, one represented by the poems of the Cycle, the other by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.²⁸ The evidence of vase-painting corroborates this conclusion. In recent decades, it has been demonstrated beyond doubt that while images evoking poems of the Epic

²⁶ See above, ch. 15.

²⁷ See further above, ch. 17, 176–80.

²⁸ Similarly, Nagy 1990, 73, accounts for Homer's relationship with the Cycle by arguing that 'the Panhellenization of the Homeric tradition entailed a differentiation from older layers of Panhellenic epic tradition'.

Cycle started to appear on the vases from the eighth century BCE, clearly recognizable Homeric themes are not represented till the late seventh century.²⁹ This strongly suggests that the circulation of traditional prototypes of the Cycle poems preceded the circulation of the poems of Homer. This is also one of the reasons why many scholars today place Homer in the second half of the seventh century BCE rather than, as was assumed earlier, in the second half of the eighth century (ch. 31).

As far as I can see, the Cycle's emphasis on historical discontinuity, the deterioration of mankind and migrations suggests the period that immediately followed the collapse of Mycenaean Greece. This vision was taken into the early Archaic Age, when the consolidation of the new Greek civilization, addressed in the previous section, took place, and was adapted to its needs. The adaptation, however, was far from complete. The discontinuity with the past and a markedly pessimistic view of the present, inbuilt in the myth of the end of Heroes, disagreed with the projection of the Panhellenic idea into the heroic past and the positive self-image that the new Greek civilization aspired to communicate. An adjustment was required, and it was supplied by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. On this interpretation, Homer's revision of the earlier epic tradition must have been late archaic. By abandoning the myth of the end of the Race of Heroes, as well as such corollaries of it as the Heroes' posthumous immortalization and their migrations to remote lands, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* reversed the negative historical perspective of the earlier tradition and provided the Greek civilization with a new foundational myth that sustained its validity till the end of antiquity.

Coming into being: possible scenarios

While some scholars place the standardization of the Homeric poems in Ionia of the eighth or seventh century BCE, others associate it with sixth-century Athens. Contrary to the widespread view, the two hypotheses are not necessarily mutually exclusive.³⁰ As the studies of Barbara Graziosi, Douglas Frame and Gregory Nagy have shown, the Panathenaic performance of Homer, apparently introduced in 522 BCE on the initiative of the Pisistratid Hipparchus (above), was a legitimate successor of earlier performances at Panionian festivals, such as those at Mycale in Asia Minor or at Delos.³¹ We cannot of course be sure that 'Homer'

²⁹ On this subject see esp. Burgess 2001, 35–44, 53–114 and below, ch. 31.

³⁰ See further below, ch. 31.

³¹ Graziosi 2002; Frame 2009; Nagy 2009.

performed at these festivals amounted to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* rather than to the poems of the Trojan Cycle, but if it did, then the revision of the heroic tradition as outlined above should have taken place in late archaic Ionia. Furthermore, if the Homeric poems had indeed been fixed in writing already at this stage, then the Panathenaic text of Homer could hardly be much more than, so to say, an ‘Athenian edition’ of the already existing Ionian epics.

If, on the other hand, it is the sixth-century BCE Athens that should be considered the birthplace of the Homeric poems as we know them, then only the first stage of the Trojan tradition, the one represented by the Cycle poems, should be associated with Ionia. In this scenario, the revision of the Cycle tradition as found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* should be attributed to the Ionian bard(s) commissioned to produce the Panathenaic text of Homer. It should be noted in this connection that, while both the nostalgic stance inherent to the myth of the end of Heroes and its emphasis on migrations may well point in the direction of the descendants of Mycenaean refugees settled in Asia Minor at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, the opposite tendencies characteristic of the *Iliad* and, especially, the *Odyssey*³² would go very well indeed with the mainland cultural milieu and the Panhellenic aspirations of the sixth-century Athens.

Whether the standardization of the text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* under Hipparchus was the primary or the secondary one, there is little room for doubt that the Panathenaic text played a pivotal role in the subsequent transmission of the Homeric poems. The appropriation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* granted the Athenian state the monopoly over what was quickly recognized by all as the standard text of Homer. The rhapsodes, professional performers of the Homeric epics, recited the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not only at the Panathenaic festival, which rapidly gained the Panhellenic status, but also all over Greece.³³ The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* became the focus of school education and of scholarly, philosophical and theological hermeneutics, to be studied by schoolchildren and commented upon by intellectuals all over the Greek-speaking world. This is why the history of the Homeric poems is not just a history of a literary text but that of a literary text highly privileged in the civilization to which it belonged.³⁴

³² Cf. Cook 1995.

³³ Including Dorian Sparta but apparently excluding Dorian Crete, see Plato *Laws* 680c.

³⁴ Cf. below, ch. 27. I would like to express my gratitude to Fritz-Heiner Mutschler for his warm hospitality and stimulating influence. I would also like to thank the participants of the Beijing conference for their helpful comments and discussion. The second part of this article was written during my term as an International Visiting Research Scholar at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, University of British Columbia (January-February 2014).

Part III: **Homer's Worlds and Values**

19 Royal Succession in Heroic Greece

This article is about the rules of succession in Bronze Age Greece as reflected in Greek tradition. The question as to whether or not the names circulating in this tradition are historical is of little relevance to the present discussion: what I seek to recover is not the history of one royal house or another but rather the recurring patterns according to which the members of these houses—no matter whether real or fictitious—were expected to behave when it came to the question of accession to the throne and transmission of the kingship to their successors.

1

Contrary to appearances, Greek heroic tradition does not supply sufficient evidence for seeing the kingship as transmitted from father to son. Consider, for example, the story of Pelops, a newcomer from Asia Minor, who became king in Elis in virtue of his marriage to Hippodameia, daughter of the local king Oinomaos. Although Pelops is said to have fathered many sons, the remarkable thing about this king is that none of his sons succeeded him on the throne. Actually, the tradition does supply an explanation as to why the two most prominent sons of Pelops, Atreus and Thyestes, did not succeed their father in Elis: Pelops exiled the two brothers to punish them for the murder of their step-brother Chrysippos, Pelops' son by another wife. The difficulty, however, is that this story can hardly account for the rest of Pelops' sons, who became kings elsewhere rather than in Elis itself.¹ This compares with the case of Peleus and Telamon, the sons of Aiakos king of Aegina, who are also said to have killed their step-brother, Phokos, and because of this were exiled by their father: Peleus became king in Phthia, Telamon in Salamis.² It goes without saying that the behaviour of Pelops and Aiakos toward their sons is strikingly at variance with what could be expected of dynastic kings, for it appears that no sons were left to succeed these kings on the throne. The next kings of Elis and Aegina must have been of a different line. That this is far from being an unusual situation can be seen from the case of Oineus and his descendants. The Aetolian entry in the Catalogue of Ships contains a brief remark

¹ Pelops and Hippodameia: Pind. *Ol.* 1.67–71, 88; the murder of Chrysippos: Hellan. 4 F 157 Jacoby (= schol. *Il.* 2.105); Thuc. 1.9.2; the sons of Pelops: Pind. *Ol.* 1.89; schol. Eur. *Or.* 4. According to Pindar, Pelops fathered six sons, but other sources give him more. For discussion see M. West 1985, 109–10.

² Pind. *Nem.* 5.14–16 with schol.; Diod. 4.72.6–7; Hyg. *Fab.* 14; Paus. 2.29.2.

to the effect that the leaders of the Aetolians in the Trojan War were not of Oineus' line, because by that time no sons of this king were left.³ The explanation is far from exact, because even after Meleager's death Oineus' son Tydeus and grandson Diomedes still remained to be accounted for. Now Tydeus, again, had been exiled from Aetolia for murdering a relative; he went to Argos, where he married a daughter of king Adrastos. His son Diomedes, who married another daughter of the same king, succeeded his father-in-law on the throne, whereas his grandfather Oineus, left with no direct descendants in Aetolia, was succeeded by his son-in-law Andraimon.⁴

Let us take some additional examples. Bellerophontes went from Greece to Lycia, where he married the king's daughter and became king. Teucer, instead of returning to his native Salamis after the Trojan War, settled in Cyprus, where he became king; his father Telamon was left in Salamis with no male descendants to succeed him. Melampous came from Messenia to Argos, where he cured the daughters of the king Proitos of their madness, married one of them and became king; although Proitos had a son of his own, this son, Megapenthes, is said to have been born too late to succeed his father. Xouthos came from Thessaly to Athens, helped king Erechtheus in his war against Euboea, married his daughter and became king, and so on.⁵ Of course, every specific situation is usually provided with a more or less plausible explanation but, leaving the explanations aside, we are left with a recurrent pattern which is not dissimilar to Hecataeus' concise account of Orestheus son of Deukalion: 'And Orestheus son of Deukalion went to Aetolia to become king' (ἐπὶ βασιλείᾳ).⁶

Who were the successors of Pelops in Elis, of Aiakos in Aegina, of Telamon in Salamis? Our sources do not supply the answer. Indeed, the genre of the king-list, widespread in literatures of the ancient Near East, was totally alien to Greek heroic tradition. Instead, this tradition arranged the names of kings according to the genealogical principle. The distinction between the two genres, the genealogy and the king-list, is not merely conventional: while the king-list is committed to preserving the unity of place, the genealogy would follow the given line of descent wherever its representatives are found. The genealogy and the king-list only concur when the king-list follows dynastic succession from father to son: if the

³ *Il.* 2.641–42 οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' Οἰνῆος μεγαλήτορος υἱέες ἦσαν, / οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτ' αὐτὸς ἔην, θάνε δὲ ξανθὸς Μελέαγρος (athetized by Zenodotus).

⁴ Tydeus *Apollod.* 1.76; Diomedes *Il.* 5.412; Andraimon *Apollod.* 1.64, 78, cf. *Il.* 2.638.

⁵ Bellerophontes: *Il.* 6.155–95; Teucer: Pind. *Nem.* 4.46–47; Paus. 2.29.4; Melampous: *Od.* 15.225–41; *Apollod.* 2.28–29, cf. 1.102; Xouthos: Eur. *Ion* 57–64, 289–98; Strab. 8.7.1, p. 383; Paus. 7.1.2.

⁶ Hecat. F 15 Jacoby.

king is not succeeded by his son, the identity of his successor cannot be established on the basis of genealogy.

Yet, although the early tradition follows only genealogical sequences, attempts at drawing up something similar to king-lists do emerge from time to time in later sources. Let us consider the perspective of royal succession as preserved in Pausanias' account of the first kings of Attica:

This Amphiktyon became king in the following way: Aktaios is supposed to have been the first king of what is now Attica: when he died Kekrops, who was married to his daughter, inherited the monarchy, and then Kekrops had three daughters, Herse, Aglauros, and Pandorsos, and a son Erysichthon. This son was never king in Athens, since he died in his father's lifetime, so Kranaos, the most powerful man in Athens, inherited the monarchy of Kekrops. The story goes on that Kranaos had daughters as well, one of whom was Atthis, after whom the country of Attica is named (it was previously called Aktaia). Amphiktyon, who was married to Kranaos' daughter Atthis, none the less rebelled against him, and put an end to his reign. He in his turn was thrown out by Erichthonios and his fellow rebels.⁷

It can be seen from this account that of the four kings who according to Pausanias succeeded Aktaios on the throne, not even one was son of his predecessor. At the same time, at least two of these kings, Kekrops and Amphiktyon, were definitely their predecessors' sons-in-law. In his account of another early kingdom, that of Megara, Pausanias explicitly states that in the royal succession Nisos-Megareus-Alkathoos attested for Megara, the kingship was transmitted from father-in-law to son-in-law.⁸

To be sure, accession to the throne as a result of marriage to the local king's daughter is a well-known motif in Greek heroic tradition. Not only the first kings of Athens and Megara, but also Pelops, Bellerophontes, Melampous, Peleus, Telamon, Teucer, Andraimon, Diomedes, and many others achieved kingship by virtue of their marriages to the daughters of their predecessors. This is usually understood to mean that the daughter's husband would succeed his father-in-law if the latter had no sons of his own (the *epiklēros* pattern). Sometimes, even if a son is attested, he can be disposed of as one who, like Proitos' son Megapenthes, was allegedly born too late or, like Kekrops' son Erysichthon, died too early to succeed his father on the throne.⁹ On the whole, however, the rate of sonless kings in

⁷ Paus. 1.2, transl. P. Levi; cf. Apollod. 3.180–86.

⁸ Paus. 1.41.5 διαδέξασθαι δὲ τὴν βασιλείαν γαμβρὸν Νίσου τε Μεγαρέα καὶ αὐτοῦ Ἀλκάθου Μегарέως.

⁹ Megapenthes: Apollod. 2.29; Erysichthon: Paus. 1.2.6. Another example of a similar exegesis is preserved by Pausanias in his account of the early kings of Megara (1.41.3–5, cf. the preceding note). Alkathoos son of Pelops killed the lion of Kithairon, married the daughter of the king

Greek tradition is as extraordinary as that of the kings who exile their sons, and it can hardly be a mere coincidence that the sons of the latter category of kings usually become sons-in-law and successors of the former.

But even if we admit that all those kings who were succeeded by their sons-in-law were indeed sonless or had lost their sons, this still would not solve the problem of the well-attested sequence Tyndareos-Menelaus, which, again, is not based on the father-to-son succession: Menelaus succeeded Tyndareos by virtue of his marriage to Tyndareos' daughter Helen. At the same time, Tyndareos definitely had two sons, Kastor and Polydeukes, who were alive when their sister was given in marriage to Menelaus. Yet, the crown goes neither to Kastor nor to Polydeukes but to Helen's husband Menelaus. Moreover, Helen's brothers not only do not dispute their father's decision to make one of Helen's suitors king of Sparta—as the *Catalogue of Women* clearly shows, they were even actively involved in choosing the man who was supposed to become their father's successor.¹⁰

Thus, although there can be no doubt that Tyndareos had male descendants, the kingship was still bestowed on his son-in-law rather than on one of his sons. At the same time, it would be wrong to conclude that dynastic succession is altogether irrelevant here, because if the king is succeeded by his son-in-law, this would mean that the queen is succeeded by her daughter (Fig. 1). That is to say, in Sparta, and obviously also in other places for which kingship by marriage is attested, rather than a line of kings, we have a line of queens that runs from mother to daughter.¹¹

Megareus, and became king in his stead. Yet Megareus had two sons of his own, Euippos and Timalkos. According to the Megarian version, Euippos was slain by the lion of Kithairon, whereas Timalkos was even earlier killed by Theseus. However, Pausanias demonstrates conclusively that the version of Timalkos' early death is invalid.

10 [Hes.] fr. 197.3–4; 198.7–8; 199.1–3 M-W.

11 In a number of versions, Orestes succeeds Menelaus in Sparta by virtue of his marriage to Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus and Helen (already in Pind. *Pyth.* 11.31–32). Thus, according to Paus. 2.18.6, Orestes became king of Sparta because the Spartans preferred him to Nikostratos and Megapenthes, Menelaus' sons by a slave-girl. However, according to [Hes.] fr. 175 M-W, Nikostratos was son of Menelaus and Helen; this version is followed in Apollod. 3.133, cf. M. West 1985, 119 and n. 203. The alleged illegal birth of Nikostratos looks suspiciously similar to the late birth of the Argive Megapenthes and the early death of Erysichthon and Timalkos (see n. 9). It is probable, then, that the mother-to-daughter succession in Sparta should be continued so as to include Hermione as well, see Finkelberg 2005, 68–69.

Leda	~	Tyndareos
↓		
Helen	~	Menelaus.

Fig. 1: Mother-daughter succession.

It was noticed long ago that in historic times in Asia Minor there still existed a ‘marriage custom, according to which inheritance and kingship was [sic] transmitted through the female line, which often led to the practice of incest within royal families’.¹² The status of the Hittite queen affords an additional example:

It is generally agreed that the peculiar position of the Hittite queen, whose title, *tawannaš*, was inherited only on the death of her predecessor and was retained for life, can only be explained as a survival of a system of matrilinear succession which must once have prevailed among the ancient Khattians. It has been suggested that the king (*labarnaš*) was originally merely ‘the queen’s consort’: the Indo-European immigrants would have achieved kingship by marrying the local ‘matriarch’, as did so many heroes of Greek legend who succeeded to thrones in Anatolia by marrying the daughter of the local king and, having done so, sought to establish their own patriarchal system.¹³

However, as far as the present evidence goes, there is no reason to treat the matrimonial accession to the throne as an imported custom. If the case of Bellerophon who went to Lycia and became king by marrying the local king’s daughter can serve, as it often does, as demonstration of the fact that this form of kingship was specifically Asianic, what should we say then of Pelops who, having travelled in the opposite direction, became king in Greece in exactly the same way? Moreover, figures like Bellerophon or Pelops, who migrate from one land to another, are relatively rare in Greek tradition: the majority of our examples deals with heroes who never left Greece.

Each single case, taken alone, proves nothing. But the evidence is cumulative, and the persistence with which the same basic situations recur suggests that kingship by marriage represents a general rule. Still more so when we are fortunate enough to possess a document that can only be properly explained by application of this rule. I mean the situation in Ithaca as described in the Homeric *Odyssey*.

¹² Ramsay 1928, 238.

¹³ Gurney 1973, 667; cf. Finkelberg 2005, 71–79.

It has always been recognized that the social background of the Ithaca situation is difficult in more than one respect. To recapitulate the standard analysis by M.I. Finley, it is far from clear why the king's son Telemachus not only cannot assume automatically the position of his missing and presumably dead father, but is even ready to entertain the possibility that the future king of Ithaca is to be found somewhere among the local nobles who are wooing his mother.¹⁴ The position of Odysseus' father Laertes is still more puzzling:

Why did he not sit on the throne of Ithaca? ... Nor is there a hint that Odysseus had usurped his father's position ... Yet, so far was the ex-king from authority that all the while the suitors were threatening to destroy the very substance of his son and grandson, Laertes could do no more than withdraw in isolation to his farm, and there to grieve and lament.¹⁵

Finally, there is every reason to wonder why those who wish to occupy Odysseus' position insistently connect this with marriage to the king's wife Penelope. To quote Finley again, 'the Penelope situation had become so muddled in the long prehistory of the *Odyssey* that the actual social and legal situation is no longer recoverable'.¹⁶

Finley's analysis, as indeed many other analyses of the social situation in Ithaca, proceeds from the assumption that Odysseus' legitimate successor on the throne of Ithaca is his son Telemachus, that the king who preceded Odysseus was his father Laertes, and that the usurpation of the throne planned by the suitors can hardly have anything to do with Odysseus' wife Penelope. The trouble, however, is that neither Telemachus, nor Laertes, nor the suitors behave in accordance with this assumption, and this is exactly what makes the Ithaca situation problematic. It seems, however, that the behaviour of the protagonists of the *Odyssey* as indeed the entire situation reflected in the poem will become much more consistent when approached in the vein of the matrimonial accession to the throne.

If the dynastic succession is transmitted from mother to daughter, the king's son cannot count as his father's successor for reasons of incest: compare, indeed, the story of Oedipus, which offers perhaps the most clear-cut case of the father-

¹⁴ Finley 1978, 84–85. Characteristically, not only Penelope's suitors but also Telemachus himself state explicitly on more than one occasion that Odysseus' son is not considered the next king of Ithaca: Telemachus' real concern is not so much with the kingship as with his *oikos* which is being destroyed by the suitors. See *Od.* 1.394–95, 400–401; 20.334–37.

¹⁵ Finley 1978, 86–87.

¹⁶ Finley 1978, 90.

to-son succession in heroic Greece. Accordingly, this would disqualify both Odysseus' father Laertes and Odysseus' son Telemachus from the position of king of Ithaca. The only person who would count in such a situation is the new husband of Odysseus' wife Penelope. As a matter of fact, this conclusion comes close enough to those arrived at by many *Odyssey* scholars. Thus, Finley, though rejecting solutions based on matriarchy or matrilinear descent, nevertheless admits that the prerogative of bestowing the kingship 'mysteriously belongs to Penelope'.¹⁷ The solution he proposes is as follows:

Along with his [Odysseus'] rule, his successor was also to take his wife, his widow as many thought. On this point they were terribly insistent, and it may be suggested that their reasoning was this: that by Penelope's receiving the suitor of her choice into the bed of Odysseus, some shadow of legitimacy, however dim and fictitious, would be thrown over the new king.¹⁸

Yet comparison of Penelope's case with that of Clytaemnestra, whose receiving the man of her choice into the bed of Agamemnon made a king of Aegisthus, shows clearly enough that it was not merely a shadow of legitimacy but this very legitimacy itself that marriage with the queen was to bestow on the new king of Ithaca.¹⁹

When a social practice becomes obsolete, but situations created by it continue to circulate in popular tradition, it is only natural that the tradition, wherever it remains true to itself, should attempt to produce plausible explanations purporting to account for the situation in question.²⁰ This seems to be the reason why in the course of time the institution of kingship by marriage, which can be shown to underlie many episodes of Greek legend, was either reinterpreted in the vein of later ideas of succession or simply blurred by a host of stock motifs, such as those of the exiled prince, the sonless king, and the like. However, neither the story of Helen's marriage nor that of Penelope and her suitors, sanctioned as they were by the authority of Homeric tradition, lent themselves to this kind of emendation. As it happens, it is these two cases that throw light on the cumulative evidence supplied by Greek legend as to the nature of royal succession in Bronze Age Greece.

¹⁷ Finley 1978, 91.

¹⁸ Finley 1978, 90.

¹⁹ Similar situations are also attested for Argos, where Kometes son of Sthenelos married the queen Aigialeia and simply expelled the former king Diomedes on his return from Troy, and for Crete, whence the former king Idomeneus had been expelled exactly in the same way, see Apollod. *Epit.* 6.9–10.

²⁰ On the amalgamation thus produced see above, ch. 18, 189–90, and below, ch. 22, 265–67.

2

As early as 1905, J.G. Frazer pointed out that the succession of the first Latin kings was in the female line, that is, through marriage with the king's daughter or wife: in support of his argument Frazer also adduced several episodes from Greek legend, including some of those discussed above.²¹ Frazer, as well as other scholars afterwards, took this evidence to mean that kingship by marriage amounted to matrilinear reckoning of descent or, to put it in his own words, that we have 'a state of society where nobility is reckoned only through women, in other words, where descent through the mother is everything and descent through the father is nothing'.²² However, examination of the evidence involved shows that, as far at least as the Greek materials are concerned, the interpretation proposed by Frazer is unwarranted. The simple and undeniable fact is that reckoning of descent in Greek genealogies is strictly patrilinear. Though the Greeks, from Homer to later genealogists, were perfectly able to trace a person's descent up to Deukalion himself or to some other prehistoric forefather,²³ nothing even remotely similar to this can be found in the female line. Any attempt to trace a sufficiently long and reliable line of matrilinear descent is doomed to failure, obviously because Greek heroic tradition, our main source, shows a lack of interest in genealogies reckoned through women.²⁴ This seems to indicate that patrilinear reckoning of descent and kingship by marriage were not mutually exclusive after all. Accordingly, determining the relationship between the two is our next task.

²¹ Frazer 1905, 238–41.

²² Frazer 1905, 234.

²³ Glaucus' genealogy, as adduced at *Il.* 6.152–55, 195–206, comprises six generations (Aiolos-Sisyphos-Glaucus-Bellerophon-Hippolochos-Glaucus); Aeneas' at *Il.* 20.215–40 eight (Zeus-Dardanos-Erichthonios-Tros-Assarakos-Kapus-Anchises-Aeneas); and Kodros' genealogy as adduced by Hellanicus (see n. 24) comprises twelve generations.

²⁴ As clearly follows both from the reconstruction of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* by R. Merkelbach and M. West (1967) and from M. West's (1985) subsequent analysis of the structure of this poem, women are invariably treated here as subordinated to the overall patrilinear arrangement of the genealogical material. The same can be said of Greek genealogical lore in general. The twelve-generation genealogy of Kodros by Hellanicus can serve as an example. Hellanicus gives the following sequence: 'Deukalion and Pyrrha ... gave birth to Hellen; Hellen and Othreis gave birth to Xouthos, Aiolos, Xenopatra; Aiolos and Iphis daughter of Peneios, to Salomoneus; Salomoneus and Alkidike, to Tyro; *Tyro and Poseidon, to Neleus*; Neleus and Chlortis, to Periklymenos; Periklymenos and Peisidike, to Boros; Boros and Lysidike, to Penthilos; Penthilos and Anchiroe, to Andropompos; Andropompos and *Henioche, daughter of Armenios son of Zeuxippos son of Eumelos son of Admetos*, gave birth to Melanthos; upon the Return of the Children of Heracles, the latter moved from Messenia to Athens, and he begat Kodros' (Hellan. F 125 Jacoby; my emphasis). Note that of the two women taking part in this genealogy, Henioche is

Greek tradition is unanimous in that the Aeolid Melampous came from Messenia to Argos, where he cured king Proitos' daughters, married one of them, Iphianassa, and thus became king.²⁵ According to some, Melampous' marriage was accompanied by a dynastic arrangement stipulating that not only Melampous himself, but also his brother Bias would receive a share in the kingship: as a result, the Argive kingdom was divided into three parts, of which two went to the descendants of Melampous and Bias and one to the representatives of the local dynasty, descendants of Proitos' son Megapenthes.²⁶ Yet a closer examination of this arrangement shows that the tradition of the tripartite kingship of Argos should not be taken as meaning that at any given moment there were three kings jointly ruling over Argos. To begin with, of the three persons who presumably became kings of Argos upon the agreement between Melampous and Proitos (Melampous, Bias, Megapenthes), only Melampous himself can be seriously taken into account as king of Argos. Bias' alleged marriage to a daughter of Proitos, which was supposed to be part of the arrangement, is incompatible with his marriage to Neleus' daughter Pero, which is one of the principal Greek traditions as regards legendary heroines.²⁷ That Bias' marriage to an Argive princess cannot be authentic follows also from the fact that, while the descendants of Bias and Pero are well known to Greek tradition, there is no trace of Bias' children by a daughter of Proitos. As to Megapenthes, we saw above that the entire issue of his late birth was most probably intended to account for the disturbing fact that a son of Proitos did not succeed his father in Argos.

treated in strictly patrilinear terms, and the introduction of her genealogy alongside that of her husband Andropompos does not affect the agnatic reckoning of the descent of their son Melanthos. As distinct from this, Tyro looks like an intruder on the patrilinear scheme: she is represented as continuing the line of her father Salmoneus, and her son Neleus is represented as her successor. This fits in perfectly well with the *epiklēros* pattern, known to us from the historic period: in the absence of sons, the father's line would be continued by his daughter whose sons would count as male descendants of their maternal grandfather, see, e.g., Gernet 1921. If the *Ehoiai* were indeed part of the *Catalogue* rather than a separate poem (see M. West 1985, 31–32), it is not out of the question that this was the principle according to which the major *Ehoiai* (including that of Tyro) were introduced into the poem.

²⁵ Pherec. 3 F 114 Jacoby; cf. *Od.* 15.238–41.

²⁶ Hdt. 9.34; Diod. 4.68; Apollod. 1.102; 2.28–29; Paus. 2.18.4.

²⁷ *Od.* 11.28–97; 15.226–39; Pherec. 3 F 33 Jacoby. In the *Catalogue of Women*, [Hes.] fr. 37.5–15 M-W, it is already as the husband of Pero that Bias goes to Argos, presumably only to receive a share in Proitos' kingdom, cf. M. West 1985, 79 n. 109, whereas *Od.* 15.235–39 clearly implies that Bias remained in Pylos and that Melampous went to Argos alone.

In the next generation, Melampous' sons Antiphates and Mantios are hardly more than mere names, and there is no trace of such kings in Greek tradition.²⁸ As distinct from this, Talaos, presumably son of Bias and Pero, is explicitly referred to by Pindar as the ruler of Argos.²⁹ However, placing Talaos a generation after Melampous is difficult for chronological reasons. Indeed, if we try to synchronize the line of Melampous with that of his brother Bias, we shall find that the four-generation sequence Melampous-Antiphates-Oïkles-Amphiaraos is answered by a three-generation sequence Bias-Talaos-Adrastos, which is hardly possible not only because Melampous and Bias were brothers but also because their descendants Amphiaraos and Adrastos must belong in the same generation.³⁰ Significantly, such an early authority on Greek genealogies as Pherecydes of Athens does not include Talaos in his list of the children of Bias and Pero.³¹ In view of this, it seems reasonable to take Talaos as grandson rather than as son of Bias and Pero and accordingly to place his kingship in the next generation. This would leave us with Megapenthes' son Anaxagoras as the only candidate to succeed Melampous: Anaxagoras was known not only as king of Argos but even as the founder of a clan.³²

Accordingly, the representatives of the next generation must have been Oïkles (Melampous' line), Talaos (Bias' line), and Hipponoos (Megapenthes' line). Of these three, Oïkles, though famous enough, has never been associated with Argos, whereas Hipponoos certainly was king elsewhere.³³ This would entail that Melampous not only ruled alone but also was succeeded by a single king, who was neither his own son nor a son of his brother Bias, but Anaxagoras son of Megapenthes, and that the latter was succeeded by Talaos, a representative of the line of Bias. This seems to indicate that the tripartite kingship of Argos should be understood as successive, that is, that only representatives of the clans of Melampous, Bias, and Megapenthes had the right to sit on the throne of Argos in

²⁸ *Od.* 5.242–55; cf. [Hes.] fr. 136 M-W; Pherec. 3 FF 115–116 Jacoby. For discussion of Melampous' descendants see also M. West 1985, 79–81.

²⁹ *Nem.* 9.13–15.

³⁰ That of the Seven against Thebes. This is further supported by the fact that not only Adrastos but also other sons of Talaos (Aristomachos, Hippomedon, Mekisteus, Parthenopaios, Pronax) are referred to in various sources as participants in that expedition.

³¹ At F 33.37 Jacoby, Pherecydes only names Perialkes, Aretos, and Alpheisiboia as children of Bias and Pero. The first mentioning of Talaos as son of Bias and Pero is Ap. Rhod. 1.118–20.

³² Οἱ Ἀναξαγορίδαι Paus. 2.18.5; 2.30.10. On Anaxagoras' genealogical position see M. West 1985, 177; cf. also *ibid.* 81 and n. 111.

³³ According to Apollod. 3.87 and Paus. 8.36.6, Oïkles was at home in Arcadia; as follows from Diod. 4.35.1–2 and Apollod. 1.74, Hipponoos was king of Olenos in Achaea.

turn, rather than that they occupied the throne at one and the same time. This should help us to decide who was the Argive king in the generation of the Seven.

This generation was represented by Amphiaraos (Melampous' line), Adrastos (Bias' line), and Kapaneus (Megapenthes' line). If the Argive kingship was indeed transmitted in rotation, the next in turn was Melampous' descendant Amphiaraos. Yet, it was Bias' descendant Adrastos who is usually seen as king of Argos in the generation of the Theban War.³⁴ Note, however, that Adrastos was at home also in Sicyon and it is only as the Sicyonian king that he is known to the composer of the Catalogue of Ships.³⁵ Moreover, Sicyon and not Argos was the place that had Adrastos' *herōon* and cult.³⁶ As distinct from this, no other kingdom is attested for Amphiaraos, whereas his sons appear as Helen's Argive suitors in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.³⁷ In view of this, there seems reason to suppose that Amphiaraos' original position was misinterpreted in the later tradition which, naturally enough, believed that Talaos' successor on the throne must have been his son Adrastos rather than his son-in-law Amphiaraos.³⁸

Accordingly, the Argive 'king-list' from Proitos to the generation of the Theban War can be represented as shown in Fig. 2 (the names of the actual kings of Argos are emphasized).³⁹

³⁴ See, however, Pind. *Nem.* 9.13–14, where Adrastos and his brothers are seen as having been expelled from Argos by Amphiaraos: *φεῦγε γὰρ Ἀμφιαρῆ ποτε θρασυμήδεα καὶ δεινὰν στάσιν πατρίων οἶκον ἀπὸ τ' Ἀργεος· ἄρχοι δ' οὐκ ἔτ' ἔσαν Ταλαοῦ παῖδες, βιασθέντες λῦα.*

³⁵ *Il.* 2.572 καὶ Σικυῶν', ὅθ' ἄρ' Ἀδρηστος πρῶτ' ἐμβασίλευεν.

³⁶ *Hdt.* 5.67.

³⁷ [*Hes.*] fr. 197.6–7 M-W.

³⁸ Adrastos' kingship at Argos was rejected on independent grounds by Nilsson 1932, 113–14, see esp. p. 114: 'Adrastos was not king of the city of Argos, though he is genealogically annexed to the kingly house of Argos'.

³⁹ Obviously, the strict application of the principle of tripartite kingship would cast doubt on the legitimacy of Diomedes' kingship, attested for the next generation: Diomedes belonged to none of the three clans whose representatives sat in turn on the throne of Argos (though in some sources he is connected through the female line with the clan of Megapenthes). This doubt was expressed by Pausanias (2.30.10), in whose opinion the kingship of Argos really belonged to Kapaneus' son Sthenelus. Surprisingly enough, Pausanias' conclusion fits in perfectly well with the order of the rotation as represented in Fig. 2: the legitimate successor of Amphiaraos is the representative of Megapenthes' line in the next generation, that is, Kapaneus' son Sthenelos. In the Catalogue of Ships, *Il.* 2.563–6, Diomedes in fact occupies the place of the descendants of Amphiaraos.

Proitos		
↓		
Megapenthes	Melampous	Bias
↓	↓	↓
Anaxagoras	Antipathes	son
↓	↓	↓
Hipponoos	Oïkles	Talaos
↓	↓	↓
Kapaneus	Amphiaraios	Adrastos

Fig. 2: Argive ‘king-list’.

Let us turn now to the female line of the royal house of Argos. Here, the sequence Proitos-Melampous is answered by the sequence Stheneboia⁴⁰-Iphianassa, a clear-cut case of mother-to-daughter succession. Unfortunately, we have a lacuna in the following generation, because neither the name of Anaxagoras’ wife nor indeed that of any other queen who could have succeeded Iphianassa is known to us. But the queen in the generation after that was surely Talaos’ wife Lysimache, and her daughter was Amphiaraios’ wife Eriphyle, the sinister protagonist of the Theban saga. In view of the fact that both the Stheneboia-Iphianassa and the Lysimache-Eriphyle sequence clearly present mother-to-daughter successions, there is reason to infer that Anaxagoras’ queen was the daughter of Iphianassa and Melampous and the mother of Lysimache (Fig. 3).

Stheneboia	~	Proitos
↓		
Iphianassa	~	Melampous
↓		
Anaxagoras’ wife	~	Anaxagoras
↓		
Lysimache	~	Talaos
↓		
Eriphyle	~	Amphiaraios

Fig. 3: Female line of royal house of Argos.

We can see now that rotation between the ruling clans was specially designed to fit the matrimonial accession to the throne.⁴¹ Indeed, as a comparison of the male

⁴⁰ Or Anteia, see *Il.* 6.160.

⁴¹ Cf. Frazer 1905, 254–57; see also Finkelberg 2005, 79–89.

and the female line clearly shows, the purpose of this arrangement was to guarantee an ordered male succession under the conditions of kingship by marriage. That this would be a correct interpretation of the tripartite kingship of Argos is corroborated by the fact that similar arrangements can be shown to have existed in other kingdoms of heroic Greece as well.

Amyklas, the son of Lakedaimon and Sparta, is credited by Apollodorus with the stem Amyklas-Kynortas-Perieres-Oibalos-Tyndareos, which is unsatisfactory in that it forces us to postulate two kings named Perieres, Perieres son of Kynortas and Perieres son of Aiolos; in addition, Apollodorus occasionally takes Perieres as father of Tyndareos.⁴² Only Perieres son of Aiolos is known to Pausanias, and he consistently represents Tyndareos as son of Oibalos.⁴³ It seems that Apollodorus' confusion regarding Perieres' genealogical position resulted from contamination of Amyklas' genealogy with the king-list of Amyclae: that is to say, Perieres the Aeolid, who succeeded Kynortas and was followed by Tyndareos, was erroneously taken by him as son of the former and father of the latter.⁴⁴ If we add to this that, according to Pherecydes and others, Amyklas was in fact succeeded by his son-in-law Argeios son of Pelops,⁴⁵ we shall be able to suggest that the original succession was Amyklas → Argeios the Pelopid → Perieres the Aeolid → Tyndareos the Amyklaid, that is, that the kingship of Amyclae was, as in the case of Argos, based on rotation between three patrilinear clans, those of Amyklas, of Pelops, and of Aiolos.

The rulers of Bronze Age Thebes are usually seen as descended from Kadmos. Yet, the tradition has also preserved the names of Theban kings, such as Pentheus or Kreon, who were not of Kadmos' line. Both are descendants of Echion, one of the earth-born Spartoi, who became Kadmos' son-in-law by marrying his daughter Agaue. Since the descendants both of Kadmos and of Echion emerge in our sources as kings of Thebes, and since the 'earth-born' nature of Echion suggests a local origin for his clan, there is reason to suppose that, as in the case of Argos, in Thebes too we have a dynastic arrangement between the local clan and the clan of the newcomer Kadmos.⁴⁶ There is little evidence as to the female line

⁴² Apollod. 1.87; 3.117; 3.123 (with Frazer's Loeb commentary *ad loc.*).

⁴³ Paus. 2.21.7; 3.1.3–4; 4.2.2, cf. 4.2.4.

⁴⁴ That Amyklas' genealogy as given by Apollodorus resulted from contamination and that the correct sequence should be Kynortas-Oibalos-Tyndareos is argued on other grounds in M. West 1985, 67 n. 86.

⁴⁵ Pherec. F 132 Jacoby Ἀργεῖος δὲ ὁ Πέλοπος ἔρχεται παρ' Ἀμύκλαν εἰς Ἀμύκλας, καὶ γαμῆ τοῦ Ἀμύκλα θυγατέρα Ἥγησάνδραν (= schol. *Od.* 4.22), cf. also schol. *Eur. Or.* 4.

⁴⁶ In his account of Boeotia, Pausanias represents the succession of the kings of Thebes during and after the Trojan War as alternating between the descendants of Polyneikos' son Thersandros

of the royal house of Thebes, but the fact is that queen Iokaste, marriage to whom made the newcomer Oedipus king of Thebes, was both widow of Laios, a representative of the line of Kadmos, and sister of Kreon, who represented the line of Echion.

There are two conflicting traditions as regards the royal dynasty of Mycenae. On the one hand, Mycenae was generally believed to have been founded by Perseus, a prince of the royal house of Tiryns, and at least one Perseid, Perseus' grandson Eurystheus, is firmly attested as king of Mycenae. On the other hand, Mycenae is firmly associated with the Pelopids Atreus, Thyestes and Agamemnon, and Homer's account of the holders of the royal sceptre of this city totally ignores the Perseids.⁴⁷ This discrepancy has recently given rise to the suggestion that one of the two traditions as to the kings of Mycenae, namely, the tradition that connects it with the Pelopids, is not authentic.⁴⁸ Yet, the examples of Argos, of Amyclae and of Thebes suggest that we are again dealing with a dynastic arrangement intended to achieve cooperation between two clans, the Perseids and the Pelopids, in securing the royal position at Mycenae.

If the descent had been reckoned in the female line, anyone would have done as the queen's husband and, accordingly, the king.⁴⁹ However, we saw that it was only the representatives of several patrilinear clans that could become in turn kings of Argos, of Amyclae, of Thebes, of Mycenae. Likewise, although the suitors of Helen, like any other group of suitors known to us from Greek tradition, intended to achieve kingship by marrying the royal heiress, their own status was determined solely in agnatic terms, namely, by attaching the name of the father and often also of the grandfather to the candidate's name.⁵⁰ This seems to entail that, although royal succession was transmitted in the female line, the question who would be the next king was decided on the basis of patrilinearly reckoned descent.

From our point of view, the king would simultaneously be a member of two nomenclatures: that of descent (the 'genealogy'), which was reckoned from father to son, and that of local rulers (the 'king-list'), which could only be reckoned

and those of Peneleos, the leader of the Boeotians in the Trojan War, see Paus. 9.5.14–16, cf. *Il.* 2.494. Nothing is known of Peneleos' origin, but he was certainly not descended from Kadmos. It may be significant in this connection that Leitos, the other non-Kadmeian leader of the Boeotians in the Trojan War (*Il.* 2.494), is given the epithet γηγενής in Eur. *Iph.* A. 259.

⁴⁷ *Il.* 2.102–108.

⁴⁸ M. West 1985, 157–59.

⁴⁹ So Frazer 1905, 234–35.

⁵⁰ [Hes.] fr. 197.6 M-W υἱὸς δ' Ἀμφιαράου Ὀϊκλείδαο ἄνακτος; 198.9–10 Θόας Ἀνδραίμονος υἱὸς / δίου Ἀρητιάδαο; 199.5 υἱὸς τ' Ἰφίκλοιο Ποδάρκης Φυλακίδαο κτλ.

on the basis of the mother-to-daughter succession.⁵¹ Yet, as the absence of matrilinear genealogies and king-lists clearly shows, it was only the agnatically reckoned descent that eventually counted. Considering that, under the conditions of kingship by marriage, only king-lists could preserve the unity of place, the fact that Bronze Age nobles did not care to keep such lists shows clearly enough that they determined their identity in tribal rather than in local terms. The heroes of Bronze Age Greece saw themselves as 'Aeolids', 'Perseids', 'Pelopids', rather than as 'Thebans', 'Mycenaeans', or 'Argives'. This would mean that, when tracing their genealogy, the descendants of Kadmos, who in historic times were found in Thera and in Cyrene, ignored those kings of Thebes who were not of their line; as the descent group of Echion either did not survive into the historic period or exerted no influence on Greek tradition, the Kadmeian part of early Theban history was the only one to be preserved. For the Heraclids, the early history of Mycenae was the history of Perseus and his descendants Eurystheus and Heracles; for the Pelopids, it was inextricably linked with the houses of Atreus and Thyestes. Since in the course of time the Perseids had become associated with the Dorians and the Pelopids with the Aeolians of Asia Minor⁵², it should come as no surprise that the Mycenae of the Dorian and the Mycenae of the Aeolian tradition exist in two different dimensions. There is reason to suppose that this lack of local identity, embedded as it was in early Greek genealogical thinking, was directly responsible for the well-known fragmentation of the legendary history of Greece. Given the character of royal succession in heroic Greece, the true local perspective, if it ever existed, could only be established in matrilinear lists of the queens (cf. n. 63).

Yet, even if it is true that we are dealing with a society in which mobility was a distinctive male feature, this is not to say that women could under no circumstances change their original residences. Note that such cornerstones of Greek tradition as the legends of Io, of the Danaids, of Europe, do concern migration of females. Characteristically, migrations of women of royal blood are usually connected in our sources with movements of population. Thus, the Danaids, whose

51 Note that kingship by marriage would make the king simultaneously at home at two places: where he was born as the king's son and where he ruled as the queen's consort. It follows from this that in order to determine the place of kingship we must locate wife and daughter, whereas the place of birth can be determined by locating mother and sister.

52 Insofar as the founders of the Aeolian colonies in Asia Minor claimed to be descendants of Orestes' son Penthiolos, see Strab. 9.2.3, p. 400, 9.2.5, p. 402; Paus. 2.18.6; 3.2.1; cf. 7.6.1–2. Note that the formation stage of Homeric tradition is firmly associated with these Aeolian colonies, cf. above, ch. 18, 190, and below, ch. 31, 366 n. 7.

arrival in Greece was generally regarded as due to foreign invasion, were eventually given in marriage to the winners of a race contest and, together with their local husbands, founded new settlements all over the Peloponnese.⁵³ Messene daughter of Triopas is said to have arrived in Messenia from Argos with collected forces of Argos and Lacedaemon; together with her local husband Polykaon son of Lelex she founded Andania, the new royal capital of Messenia.⁵⁴ Manto, the daughter of Tiresias, led a migration from Thebes to Asia Minor, where she founded Colophon together with her Cretan husband Rhakios.⁵⁵ Kyrene, the daughter of Hypseus king of Lapiths, was carried by Apollo to Libya, where the city of Cyrene was named after her.⁵⁶

Significantly, the movements of women involved not only the foundation of new cities but also the introduction of new cults. Thus, according to Herodotus, the Danaids brought with them to Greece the mysteries of Demeter, whereas Messene was credited with the establishment of the mysteries of Demeter in her new city of Andania.⁵⁷ Manto, daughter of a priest and herself a priestess, founded a shrine of Apollo at Clarus.⁵⁸ Io, whose descendants in the East were generally seen as Argive colonists,⁵⁹ was priestess of Hera of Argos. It seems, therefore, that, as distinct from the migration of royal males, whose accession to kingship in other lands only concerned their patrilinear clans,⁶⁰ the migration of females

53 The race contest for the daughters of Danaos: Pind. *Pyth.* 9.195–206, Paus. 3.12.2, Apollod. 2.21. According to Pausanias (3.22.11), Side in Lacedaemon was named after Danaos' daughter; Amymone the Danaid discovered the springs of Lerna, and the local river was named after her (2.37.1, cf. Apollod. 2.13; [Hes.] fr. 128 M-W); Achaïos' sons Archandros and Architeles came to Argos from Phthiotis and married Skaia and Automate, daughters of Danaos; Archandros gave his son the name of Settler (Metanastes; Paus. 7.1.7). Cf. also Paus. 4.30.2; 4.35.2; 7.22.5; 10.35.1.

54 Paus. 4.1.1–2, cf. 4.3.9; 4.27.6; 4.31.11.

55 Paus. 7.3.1; 9.33.1–2.

56 Pind. *Pyth.* 9.5–70 (see esp. line 54, where Kyrene is called ἀρχέπολις), cf. [Hes.] fr. 215 M-W. Kyrene is discussed in detail in M. West 1985, 85–89.

57 The Danaids Hdt. 2.171; Messene Paus. 4.1.5 and 9; 4.2.6; 4.26.8.

58 Diod. 4.66.5–6; Apollod. 3.85; Paus. 7.3.1; 9.10.2–3.

59 See esp. Pindar on Argos in *Nem.* 10.5 πολλά δ' Αἰγύπτῳ καταοίκησεν ἄσθι ταῖς Ἐπάφου παλάμαις. See also n. 63 below.

60 Glaucus' account of his genealogy in *Il.* 6.152–206 can serve as an example. Although Glaucus is well aware that his grandfather Bellerophontes came to Lycia from Argos, this does not make him see himself as Argive. Would the situation have been different if Bellerophontes had brought his Argive wife with him and Glaucus had been the descendant of both? It seems that something to this effect is suggested by the famous story of the Epizephyrian Locrians, related by Aristotle and Polybius; among them only the descendants of the hundred women who had been taken from Locris upon the foundation of the colony were considered εὐγενεῖς (Polyb. 12.5.6–8, cf. Arist. fr. 541). This is usually taken as evidence of matrilinear reckoning of descent

involved expansion of the communities of their origin, thus amounting to foundation of a colony.⁶¹

The terms ‘matriarchy’, ‘matrilinearity’, ‘mother-right’, lavishly used in works on ancient society in the first half of the twentieth century, have gradually given way to a much more restrained and sceptical attitude. This is not to say, however, that the facts that inspired this once so popular ‘matriarchal’ literature have ceased to exist. However, it is strongly felt today that the real situation was much more complex than the pioneers of the matriarchal theory were ready to admit.⁶² We saw above that kingship by marriage did not involve matrilinear reckoning of descent. The same seems to be true of the relation of this institution to so-called ‘matriarchy’ insofar as the latter is understood to the effect that the societies that practised kingship by marriage were actually ruled by women. It is true of course that in the specific situation created in Ithaca the person who was to choose the next ruler happened to be the queen, but the situation of Penelope, as well as that of other wives who had been left at home for the years of the Trojan War (cf. n. 19) was rather exceptional. The normal situation is that of a daughter who, like Helen, is given in marriage by her male relatives. It is these male relatives, the bride’s father and brothers, who usually chose the next king. That is to say, although one could become king only through marriage with the royal heiress, the institution of kingship by marriage was practised in a society that was politically controlled by men.

among the Locrians; yet a comparison with fifth-century Athens, where only those who were of Athenian descent on both their father’s and their mother’s side counted as Athenian citizens, is perhaps more relevant here. Note that in his account of the Ionian colonization of Asia Minor Herodotus states unequivocally that insofar as the Athenian colonists did not bring women with them, but married Carian wives, their descendants could not pass for genuine Athenians (1.146). See further Finkelberg 2005, 90–108.

61 The only case of post-Bronze Age colonization in which a woman was actively involved seems to be the story of the foundation of Massalia by the Phocians of Asia Minor told in Strab. 4.1.4, p. 179: the colonists were instructed by an oracle to take with them a ἡγεμῶν from the Ephesian Artemis: this ἡγεμῶν was a woman called Aristarcha (a cultic epithet of the goddess), one of the most prominent women of Ephesus (τῶν ἐντ(μῶν σφόδρα γυναικῶν); she became the priestess of Artemis in the new settlement. Strabo’s account, unparalleled in foundation legends of the archaic and classical period, has given much trouble to historians (see the discussion in Malkin 1987, 69–72); it is possible, however, that it will appear more consistent if taken in a Bronze Age context.

62 An excellent illustration of this complexity can be found in S. Pembroke’s study of terms of kinship on the sepulchral inscriptions of Lycia, see Pembroke 1965. See also Broadbent 1968, 1–17.

It seems that the position of the queen can be satisfactorily accounted for if we assume that she was the priestess of the goddess of the land. The importance of the mother-goddess in the Bronze Age Aegean societies is too well known to be dwelt upon here: the figure of the Goddess stood at the centre of the cult at this early period and it is generally agreed that, while she herself was represented by her priestess, her male consort had his human counterpart in the figure of the 'king-priest'. Accordingly, the king owed his position of local ruler to his being the queen's consort. If we assume that the priestess transmitted her position to her daughter(s), we shall have a line of queens going back to time immemorial, in fact to all those local nymphs and eponyms of cities whose names open the greater part of Greek genealogies.⁶³

When did kingship by marriage come to an end? It seems to me that the answer to this question lies with the fact that all the genealogies circulated in Greek tradition were those of kings. Now kingship ceased to exist in most of the Greek states as early as the Dark Age, and it is obvious that the institution of kingship by marriage would have come to an end together with the abolition of kingship as such.⁶⁴ Yet, this still does not entail the abolition of 'queenship', insofar as the main function of the latter was religious rather than political. If the political power of the king ensued from his being the consort of the queen who was priestess of the local goddess, the king's loss of his political status could not deprive the queen of her priestly status. The priestess was bound to perform her functions along the same lines under any regime, whether monarchic or not. This means that, so long as the priestess transmitted her position to her daughter(s), her matrilinear dynasty continued to exist, though the political consequences it once entailed had gone. That this is likely to have been the case is supported by some

63 Priestesses of Hera of Argos, whose succession was one of the systems used in Greek chronology (see Hellan. F 79b Jacoby, Thuc. 2.2.1), might well represent such a dynasty. Unfortunately, almost nothing has been preserved of Hellanicus' *Priestesses*, which dealt with the subject, but Jacoby's reconstruction (*ad* Hellan. FF 74–84) brings out the names of Io, the Danaid Hypermestra, Perseus' grandmother Eurydike, Eurystheus' daughter Admete, and so on; statues of all of them could be seen at the Argive Heraion even at the time of Pausanias, see Paus. 2.17.3 and 7, cf. Thuc. 4.133.

64 The material on the wives of the Spartan kings is too meagre to allow any definite conclusion to be reached on its basis, but such principal features of the kingship in Sparta as the absence of rotation between the two royal houses, the lack of mobility and, above all, the father-to-son succession show clearly enough that what we have here is a form of kingship essentially different from that practised in the Bronze Age. The only form of rule in which elements of kingship by marriage can be observed even in the historic period is tyranny: see Gernet 1981, 289–301, cf. Finkelberg 2005, 90–94.

striking examples of matrilinear sequence which can be shown to have existed in priestly families up to the Hellenistic period.⁶⁵

65 See especially Broadbent's reconstruction of the genealogy of a family of Epidaurian nobles in Broadbent 1968, 18–23. The unifying element in the genealogy is a direct female descent line for the women of the family, which is likely to have been preserved for eight successive generations from the 3rd century BCE; Broadbent suggests that the women of the family, who bear the names Chariko and Laphanta in alternate generations, were priestesses of the local female deities Damia and Auxesia.

20 Odysseus and the Genus ‘Hero’

The *Iliad* proceeds from an idea of hero¹ which is pure and simple: a hero is one who prizes honour and glory above life itself and dies on the battlefield in the prime of life.² Indeed, in spite of what Achilles says at a bitter moment of the choice between a short and glorious life and a long and obscure one, his actual choice is made when, warned by Thetis that Hector’s death is only a prelude to his own, he prefers to kill Hector and die himself rather than leave Patroclus un-avenged.³ Hector behaves in a similar manner: having chosen honour over life, he remains outside the walls of Troy to meet his death at Achilles’ hands.⁴ Hundreds of minor Iliadic warriors make the same choice in a less spectacular way, by the very fact that they volunteered to come to Troy in order to win glory in war. This is true both of young Simoeisios, who came to Troy even before he had time to take a wife, and fell ‘like a black poplar’ at Ajax’s hands, and of Lycaon son of Priam who, having slipped away from nearby Arisbe where he was kept in safety as a hostage, returned to the battlefield only to be taught in his last moments the bitter lesson that death is after all the inevitable conclusion to life.⁵ This attitude of the Iliadic warrior is epitomized in the following words of Sarpedon to Glaucus:

‘Ah, friend, if once escaped from this battle we were for ever to be ageless and immortal, neither would I fight myself in the foremost ranks, nor would I send you into the war that gives men renown, but now—for assuredly ten thousand fates of death (κῆρες ... θανάτοιο)

¹ The Greek word ‘hero’ can designate either people of the remote past who lived up to the time of the Trojan War and whose deeds are celebrated in epic songs, or people who became the object of cult after their deaths; the latter category also includes those who lived in historical times. The second aspect of the word ‘hero’ is alien to the Homeric epics, either because the formative stage of Greek epic tradition preceded the development of hero-cult or because for some reason or another this tradition chose to ignore it. Cf. M. West 1978, 370ff.; Nagy 1979, 114ff.

² See, e.g., Griffin 1980, 81ff.; Schein 1984, 67ff.; M.W. Edwards 1987a, 149ff.

³ *Il.* 9.406–20; 18.94–126. Cf. Pl. *Symp.* 179e: ‘after learning from his mother that if he slew Hector he should die, while if he spared him he should end his days at home in the fullness of his years, he made the braver choice and went to rescue his lover Patroclus, avenged his death, and so died ...’ (transl. M. Joyce). Cf. also *Ap.* 28c–d. On Achilles’ choice see also above, ch. 13 and below, ch. 22.

⁴ *Il.* 22.90–130; cf. 6.440–65.

⁵ Simoeisios *Il.* 4.473–89; Lycaon *Il.* 21.34–114.

do every way beset us, and these no mortal may escape nor avoid—now let us go forward, whether we shall give glory to other men, or others to us'.⁶

There can be no doubt that this is a pattern into which Odysseus of the *Odyssey* would not fit. True, Odysseus' surviving the war was far from being a matter of his personal choice: he did not shrink from risking his life on the battlefield (*Il.* 11.401–13 is the best proof of this), nor did he challenge the heroic code of behaviour by preferring long life to glorious death. It was above all the circumstances of Odysseus' life that determined that he should stay alive rather than die young. The fact however is that these circumstances exposed him to a life-experience in the face of which any conventional heroic response would have been out of place, with the result that there is no way in which Odysseus' behaviour throughout the *Odyssey* can be accounted for as heroic on terms of the *Iliad*. In what follows, I shall argue that the *Odyssey* not only is aware of the fact that the situation of its hero differs essentially from that of the heroes of the *Iliad*, but that this poem proceeds from a different idea of hero than that found in the *Iliad*.

1

The presence of 'unheroic' features in the character of Homeric Odysseus was noticed long ago, and since the time of the ancient commentators it has become habitual to gloss those features by predicating them on Odysseus' *mētis*, 'cunning', as opposed to the *biē*, 'might', of other Homeric heroes, first and foremost Achilles.⁷ There is, however, reason to believe that the difference between the heroes of the two epics goes far beyond these two characteristics.

That the feature of *mētis* does not exhaust the character of Homeric Odysseus has been made clear by W.B. Stanford, who in his exemplary study of this hero showed that 'Homer ... skilfully succeeded in distinguishing Odysseus by slight deviations from the norm in almost every heroic feature'.⁸ The following features seem to be of special interest in this connection:

(a) Odysseus is the only hero who is represented, in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as being concerned with food and explicitly discussing this subject: 'If one remembers that no other hero in the *Iliad*, nor any Homeric heroine in either

⁶ *Il.* 12.322–28; cf. also 6.487–9; Callin. 1.8–13. The English quotations from the *Iliad* are given in the translation by A. Lang, W. Leaf, and E. Myers, and those from the *Odyssey* in the translation by S.H. Butcher and A. Lang; both translations have been slightly adapted.

⁷ See further Nagy 1979, 42ff.

⁸ Stanford 1963, 66.

poem, even uses the word for “belly” and still less discusses its effects, it is clear that Odysseus is an untypical hero in this respect’.⁹ Moreover, it is precisely in this respect that Odysseus is directly opposed to Achilles in their debate on food in *Iliad* 19;¹⁰

(b) Odysseus is the only Achaean hero of importance who is described (in the *Odyssey* and in *Iliad* 10) as using the ‘unheroic’ bow rather than the spear, that standard weapon of the other heroes;

(c) Odysseus is the only Homeric hero who, in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, bears the epithet *polutlas*, ‘much-enduring’,¹¹ and who is systematically described (in the *Odyssey* only) as passing through compromise and humiliation: ‘Ajax or Achilles would never have been willing to undergo some of Odysseus’ experiences—his three adventures in beggar’s disguise, for instance, and his ignominious escape from the Cyclops’ cave by hanging under a ram’s belly’.¹²

These and other features make of Odysseus a figure completely isolated in the epics, an ‘untypical hero’ par excellence. This is not yet to say that the Greek tradition as a whole possesses no niche in which a hero like this could be placed.

Six times in the *Odyssey* the life-experience of Odysseus is defined by the word *aethlos*.¹³ Both in Homer and in Greek in general this word (*athlos* after Homer) and its cognates have two meanings: of ‘athletic contest’ and of ‘labour’, the latter being best exemplified by the labours of Heracles. The distinction between the two meanings, while clear-cut in the Homeric Lexicon of Ebeling, which discerns between *certamen*, *ludus* on the one hand and *aerumna*, *labor*, *contentio*, on the other, is blurred in the Liddell-Scott-Jones Lexicon due to the tendency to subsume all the usages of the word under the meaning ‘struggle’. The fact however is that this rendering not only ignores the indisputable etymological affinity between *aethlos/athlos* and the adjective *athlios* ‘wretched’, ‘miserable’, but also fails to account for all the usages of the term in both Homer and later authors. This can be seen from the following examples.

In her lament for Hector in *Iliad* 24, Andromache describes what might happen to the young Astyanax after the fall of Troy: ‘and you, my child, shall either go with me upon a place where you shall toil at unseemly tasks, labouring

⁹ Stanford 1963, 69.

¹⁰ *Il.* 19.154–83; 198–237.

¹¹ As part of the formula πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς; the meaning of the epithet ταλασίφρωνος, which appears with the genitive of Odysseus’ name, amounts to much the same. Note that Stanford 1963, 74, is mistaken in supposing that the epithet ‘much-enduring’ is also applied to Nestor.

¹² Stanford 1963, 74; cf. also Griffin 1987, 93 ff.

¹³ *Od.* 1.18; 4.170, 241; 23.248, 261, 350.

(ἀθλεύων) before the face of some harsh lord' etc.¹⁴ The LSJ translation '*struggling* or *suffering* for him' is unsatisfactory: the rendering 'struggling', issuing as it does from the attempt to reconcile the Homeric usage with the later and more widespread meaning 'contest', does not fit the context, whereas 'suffering' seems too weak a rendering in respect of the specific kind of experience involved.

This becomes clear from comparison with another verbal usage of the same root. In *Iliad* 7.452–53 Poseidon complains to Zeus that the wall built by the Achaeans will make men forget the one built by Apollo and himself during their service to Laomedon: 'and men will forget the wall that I and Phoebus Apollo built with labour (ἀθλήσαντε) for the hero Laomedon'. Again, the LSJ translation 'having contended with him' misses the point.¹⁵ This becomes especially clear from Poseidon's words to Apollo in *Iliad* 21.441–45, where the same experience is rendered by the verb θητεύω, 'to be a serf or labourer': You remember not all the ills that the two of us alone of the gods endured (ὅσα ... πάθομεν κακά) at Ilios, when by ordinance of Zeus we came to proud Laomedon and served (θητεύσαμεν) him through a year for promised recompense, and he laid on us his commands'. These instances go well with the *Odyssey's* definition of Heracles' labours as pronounced by Heracles himself: 'I was the son of Zeus Kronion, yet had I trouble beyond measure, for I was subdued unto a man far worse than I, and he enjoined on me hard labours (ἀέθλους)'.¹⁶ Insofar as there is a struggle here, this is a struggle for survival, and insofar as there is suffering, this is suffering involving humiliation. As was shown by Gregory Nagy, the underlying semantic affinity between *aethlos* 'contest' and *aethlos* 'labour' is at its clearest in Pindar:

In the inherited diction of praise poetry, what an athlete undergoes in his pursuit of victory is denoted by *ponos*, 'ordeal', also called *kamatos*, and these very same words apply also to the life-and-death struggle of heroes with their enemies, man and beast alike. There is a parallel situation with the partial synonym *aethlos* (*athlos*), from which *athletes*, 'athlete', is derived: besides meaning 'contest' *aethlos* also means 'ordeal' and is applicable both to the athletic event of the athlete in the present and to the life-and-death struggle of the hero in the past.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Il.* 24.732–34.

¹⁵ The same tendency can be seen in the translation of πολλά περ ἀθλήσαντα at *Il.* 15.30, relating to Heracles, as '*having gone through many struggles*': see LSJ, s.v. ἀθλέω.

¹⁶ *Od.* 11.620–22.

¹⁷ Nagy 1989, 12; cf. Nagy 1990, 136ff. This double use of the word *aethlos* can already be seen in the presentation of the chariot race in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*; see vv. 310–11: 'So they [the charioteers] were engaged in an unending toil (πόνον), and the end with victory came never to them, and the contest (ἄεθλον) was ever unwon' (transl. H.G. Evelyn White).

The only other individual hero besides Odysseus to whom the term *aethlos* is consistently applied in the epics is Heracles. Note indeed that of the fifteen epic occurrences of *aethlos* and its cognates meaning ‘labour’ as registered by Ebeling, six, as already said, relate to the life-experience of Odysseus, and five to that of Heracles.¹⁸ Consider now that, seen in the perspective of Iliadic heroism, Heracles proves to be as untypical as the Odysseus of the *Odyssey*. Moreover, it can be shown that the characteristic features of this hero exactly correspond to those of Odysseus as adduced above: Heracles’ attitude to food is no less prosaic than that of Odysseus (cf. Heracles the glutton and drunkard of the Attic scene); the bow is one of his permanent attributes, and his entire life-experience proves that Heracles, who knew many compromises and was constantly exposed to humiliation (see his service to Eurystheus and his being a slave of the Lydian queen Omphale), was as ‘much-enduring’ as Odysseus.¹⁹

The encounter of Odysseus and Heracles in the Underworld shows that it is not mere chance that these two are the only individual heroes characterized in the epics through the word *aethlos*. As A. Heubeck put it, ‘the descent into Hades is deliberately mentioned as an example of the ἄεθλοι; it is a deed which both heroes have in common and the most dangerous enterprise undertaken by either’.²⁰ Consider especially the words with which Heracles greets Odysseus on their meeting in the Underworld:

‘διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν’ Ὀδυσσεῦ,
ἃ δειλ’, ἢ τινὰ καὶ σὺ κακὸν μὶρον ἡγηλάξεις,
ὄν περ ἐγὼν ὀχέεσκον ὑπ’ αὐγὰς ἡελίοιο’.

‘Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices: ah! wretched one, do you too lead such a life of evil doom, as I endured beneath the rays of the sun?’²¹

There can be little doubt that this address with its emphatic ‘and you too’ was deliberately cast as a ‘formal’ recognition of Odysseus as a hero of the same type as Heracles himself.

Thus not only Odysseus but even Heracles, who is of course a ‘hero’ par excellence, cannot pass for one by the standards of the *Iliad*. Consider now that after

¹⁸ *Il.* 8.363; 15.30; 19.133; *Od.* 11.622, 624; cf. *H.* 15.8; *Hes. Th.* 951. Of the remaining four, two relate to the participants of the Trojan War *en masse* (*Il.* 3.162; *Od.* 3.262), one to the work done by Poseidon and Apollo in the service of the Trojan king Laomedon (*Il.* 7.453), and one to the possible future of the child Astyanax (*Il.* 24.734).

¹⁹ Cf. *H.* 15.6 (of Heracles), ‘he himself did many reckless deeds, and endured (ἀνέτλη) many’.

²⁰ In Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, 116 (on 11.623–24); cf. Galinsky 1972, 132–33.

²¹ *Od.* 11.617–19.

all Heracles is only the most prominent representative of an entire category of such heroes of Greek tradition who, like Perseus, Bellerophontes, Jason, Theseus, and others, are mostly conspicuous by the labours they performed; some of them, as, for example, Theseus, also underwent the ultimate experience of *katabasis*. None of the heroes of this group died on the battlefield. This prompts the question as to the grounds on which one was recognized as a hero.

2

Insofar as the Homeric usage is not taken into account, the main criteria on the basis of which a hero is identified in modern scholarship are those of hero-cult. A hero receives honours similar to those paid to the chthonic deities: the colour of the victims is black, they are offered at night and are slaughtered throat downward (and not upward, as for the Olympians), the liquids are poured into a trench, or low altar, ἐσχάρτα, etc.²² According to the widely accepted classification introduced by L.R. Farnell, among those who received these honours the following sub-groups can be discerned: 'heroes of divine or daimonic origin' (such as Trophonius, Linus, Ino-Leucothea); 'sacral heroes' (Aeneas, Iphigenia, Ampharaus, Melampous); 'functional heroes', whose names are in fact nothing more than appellative epithets; and also Heracles, the Dioscuri, Asclepius, each of whom is taken as a category in its own right; the heroes of the Homeric epics; and, finally, historical figures who became objects of hero-cult.²³ It is difficult to see what common feature could possibly be shared by all these heterogeneous figures to turn them into a clearly defined class. It is not surprising, therefore, that the only attempt to arrive at a definition accounting for all the cases of Greek heroism is, to my knowledge, Walter Burkert's remark that 'it is some extraordinary quality that makes the hero; something unpredictable and uncanny is left behind and is always present'; whereas the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* defines hero-cult as 'the worship, as being superhuman, of noteworthy dead men and women, real or imaginary, normally at their actual or supposed tombs'.²⁴

It seems, however, that the ancients knew better. That they did possess a coherent concept of heroism can be seen, for example, from Diodorus Siculus, according to whom 'it is an excellent thing ... to receive in exchange for mortal labours immortal honours (θνητῶν πόνων ἀντικαταλλάξασθαι τὴν ἀθάνατον

²² See, e.g., Rohde 1921, 148ff.; Guthrie 1954, 221–22.

²³ Farnell 1921, 19.

²⁴ Burkert 1985, 208; *OCD*², s.v. 'hero-cult'.

εὐφημίαν). In the case of Heracles, for instance, it is generally agreed that during the whole time which he spent among men he submitted to great and continuous labours (ὑπομεῖναι μεγάλους καὶ συνεχεῖς πόνους) and perils (κινδύνους) willingly, in order that he might confer benefits upon the race of men and thereby gain immortality; and likewise in the case of other great and good men, some have attained to heroic honours and others to honours equal to the divine...²⁵ On other occasions Diodorus mentions Perseus' war against the Gorgons as his greatest labour (τελέσαι μέγιστον ἄθλον), the labours of Jason who, 'since he observed that of the men of former times Perseus and certain others had gained fame which was held in everlasting remembrance (δόξης ἀειμνήστου) from the campaigns which they had waged in foreign lands and the hazard attending the labours (τῶν ἄθλων) they had performed, he was eager to follow the examples they had set', and Heracles again, who 'by his own labours (τοῖς ἰδίοις πόνοις) had brought under cultivation the inhabited world'.²⁶

Late and Hellenistic as it is, Diodorus' evidence deserves serious attention, because it highlights in a clear and concise form the elements which are dispersed in earlier sources. Thus, the idea that toil and suffering bring with them the highest reward is found also in such utterances of Pindar as 'if there is some happiness (ὄλβος) among men, it does not seem to have come without effort (ἄνευ καμάτου)', or 'But without hard toil (ἄπνονον), few have won the kind of victory that sheds a light upon their lifetime for all the deeds they accomplished'.²⁷ The heroes whose *aethloi* are most celebrated by Pindar are the same as those mentioned by Diodorus—Heracles, Jason, Perseus.²⁸

In Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and *Philoctetes* Heracles is represented as one who laboured for the benefit of all Greece and whose toil qualified him for divine status.²⁹ That the enduring of labours was seen as inseparable from a hero's mission follows also from the fact that Socrates is represented in Plato's *Apology* as describing his own mission in terms of labours: 'I have to describe to you my wanderings, similar to those of one who endures labours (ὥσπερ πόνους τινὰς πονοῦντος)'.³⁰ In his description of the Sicyonian cult of Adrastus, Herodotus supplies what seems to be our only direct evidence that the idea of labours and the hero-cult might have been felt to be mutually connected: 'Besides other

²⁵ Diod. Sic. 1.2.4; cf. 4.1.4–6.

²⁶ Perseus 3.52.4; Jason 4.40.2; Heracles 5.8.5; cf. 4.11.1.

²⁷ *Pyth.* 12.28–29 and *Ol.* 10.22–23.

²⁸ See esp. *Isthm.* 6.48 (Heracles); *Pyth.* 4.220, 165 (Jason); cf. *Pyth.* 10.29ff. (Perseus); cf. also Bacchyl. 9.8; 13.55–7. See also Nagy 1990, 138.

²⁹ Soph. *Trach.* 1011–13 and *Phil.* 1419–20. Cf. Eur. *H.F.* 1252; cf. 1309–10.

³⁰ Pl. *Ap.* 22a6–7.

things, the Sicyonians used to honour Adrastus with tragic choruses on account of his sufferings (πρὸς τὰ πάθεα αὐτοῦ).³¹ Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* gives us a vivid description of how a man whose signal characteristic is the immense suffering which he endured in the course of his long life eventually becomes a blessed hero,³² and the evidence provided by the *Trachiniae* and the *Philoctetes* regarding Heracles eventually amounts to much the same.

This is not yet to say that the hero-cult provided the only context in which the idea of a life of labours as culminating in the highest reward could be applied. Thus, in his famous moral allegory the fifth-century philosopher Prodicus set hardship and toil endured for a good cause as a precondition of the highest happiness. In much the same vein as Diodorus' characterization of the hero four centuries later, Prodicus makes Heracles choose the labours of Virtue over the pleasures of Vice:

'Of the good and beautiful things, nothing is given by gods to men without labour and effort (ἄνευ πόνου καὶ ἐπιμελείας), but if you wish to placate the gods, you must serve the gods; if you desire to be loved by your friends, you must be a benefactor to your friends; if you are eager to be honoured by a state, you must serve the state, and if you wish to be admired by the whole of Greece for your virtue, you should try to be a benefactor of Greece'.³³

Although Virtue's words are addressed to Heracles, the parable itself was obviously meant to apply to every man, so that 'the most blessed happiness' (*eudaimonia*) proposed by Prodicus as a reward for the life of labours need not necessarily imply the kind of reward earned by Heracles himself.³⁴ Characteristically, the divine status achieved by Heracles is usually designated by the same words, *olbos* and *olbios*, as the happiness achieved in this life.³⁵

In view of what happens to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, there is nothing extraordinary about the fact that the term 'labour', *aethlos*, bearing as it does the connotations of toil and suffering, should be associated from time to time with the poem's hero. Yet, the range of the term's application to Odysseus demonstrates beyond doubt that his association with *aethloi* was deliberate. Consider first the following lines of the prooemium: 'But when now the year had come in the course

³¹ Hdt. 5.67.5.

³² See especially O.C. 563–64, Theseus' recognition of the labours of Oedipus as being of the same kind as those endured by himself.

³³ Prodicus B 2.28 DK (=Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.28).

³⁴ Ibid. 2.2.33. Cf. Galinsky 1972, 103.

³⁵ Cf., e.g., Hes. *Th.* 954–5; cf. also Pind. *Nem.* 1.68–75; Soph. *Phil.* 1418–22.

of the seasons, wherein the gods had ordained that he should return home to Ithaca, not even there was he quit of labours (οὐδ' ἔνθα πεφυγμένος ἦεν ἀέθλων), not even among his own'.³⁶ Since at this point in the story Odysseus is with Calypso on Ogygia after he had lost all his companions, and since the Land of the Phaeacians is the only remaining stop on his way to Ithaca, there can be little doubt that, while the former labours suggested by this line may well refer to Odysseus' adventures at sea, by speaking of the 'labours' in store for Odysseus the poet meant the latter's experience as a beggar in his own home.³⁷ This is not to say, of course, that Odysseus' wanderings are not regarded in the same way. Consider indeed Odysseus' words to Penelope in *Odyssey* 23.350–53: 'Lady, already we have enough of labours (ἀέθλων), you and I; you, in weeping here, and longing for my troublous return, I, while Zeus and the other gods bound me fast in pain, despite my yearning after home, away from my own country'. And this is not all. In *Odyssey* 4 the term *aethlos* extends over Odysseus' experience during the war itself, both generally, as in 4.170 (πολέας ἐμόγησεν ἀέθλους), and particularly, in Helen's reminiscence of how Odysseus penetrated Troy disguised as a beggar (4.241).

Thus, all of Odysseus' experience, from his fighting at Troy to his return to Ithaca, is consistently described in the poem as falling into the sphere of *aethloi*. But it is *Odyssey* 23 that is especially illuminating. The war is over, and so also the wanderings, and even the struggle to re-establish himself in his own home is behind the hero of the *Odyssey*. But what does Odysseus say to Penelope immediately upon their happy reunion?

ᾧ γύναι, οὐ γάρ πω πάντων ἐπὶ πείρατ' ἀέθλων
ἦλθομεν, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ὅπισθεν ἀμέτρητος πόνος ἔσται,
πολλὸς καὶ χαλεπός, τὸν ἐμὲ χρὴ πάντα τελέσσαι'.

'Lady, we have not yet come to the issue of all our labours; but still there will be toil unmeasured, long and difficult, that I must needs bring to a full end'.³⁸

The *aethlos* meant this time is Odysseus' future journey with an oar on his shoulder to the country of men who 'know not the sea, nor eat meat savoured with salt', predicted to him by Tiresias in the Underworld. The difference between this labour and the others lies first of all in the fact that Odysseus' last labour is not only

³⁶ *Od.* 1.16–19.

³⁷ This was the interpretation preferred by Aristarchus; for a different assessment of these lines see S. West in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 74 (*ad loc.*).

³⁸ *Od.* 23.248–50.

self-imposed but also, in the vein of Heracles' civilizing mission, purports to serve the common good. Above all, however, the last labour of Odysseus is remarkable in that it is regarded as a crowning achievement in his life, an achievement which, in accordance with the view of labours outlined above, will guarantee him the appropriate reward. Indeed, according to the prophecy of Tiresias, only upon accomplishing this mission will Odysseus be able to return home, where he will live happily and die of old age: 'And from the sea shall your own death come, the gentlest death that may be, which shall end you foredone with smooth old age, and the folk shall dwell happily around you'.³⁹ This promise seems to be a clear indication of the fact that the *Odyssey* is not only aware of the popular notion of heroism as outlined above but also deliberately models its hero to fit into this notion.

3

Why is Achilles, doomed as he was to die young, never described by Homer in terms of labours? Metrically, Odysseus and Achilles are twins, so that nothing would prevent the poet from creating the expression πολύτλας δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. Consider now the remarkable fact, paid due attention by Walter Burkert, that 'it is the exception, not the rule, for those who fall in battle to receive heroic honours'.⁴⁰ This goes well with the archaic Greek practice, reflected in Herodotus' story of Tellus the Athenian, that the highest honour paid to an individual for a glorious death on the battlefield was public burial on the place of the battle.⁴¹ Consider also that Alexander, born warrior and admirer of Achilles as he was, insisted on conceiving of his conquests in terms of labours and, consciously modelling his own achievements on those of Heracles, regarded them as a necessary precondition of his future deification.⁴²

It seems significant in this connection that more often than not early death was treated in popular Greek thought as a kind of blessing. To quote Theognis,

³⁹ *Od.* 23.281–84 (=11.134–37).

⁴⁰ Burkert 1985, 207 and 431 n. 50; cf. M. West 1978, 370. Characteristically, all the examples of the worship of those who fell in battle adduced by Burkert concern collective rather than individual cult, such as that of those who fell at Marathon, at Plataea, or the Persian Wars in general: this seems to be in accordance with the Homeric practice of applying the term *aethlos* to the participants of the Trojan War in general rather than to the individuals who fell in this war (see n. 18 above).

⁴¹ *Hdt.* 1.30.3–4. See further Asheri 1988, 284 (*ad loc.*).

⁴² *Arr. Anab.* 5.26; cf. also 4.15; 4.29; 5.25 (twice); 5.29; 6.24.

'blessed, fortunate, and blissful is he who goes down to the dark house of Hades without having experienced labours (ἄπειρος ἄθλων)'.⁴³ According to Mimnermus, the fates of death, *kēres*, hold two lots for men, one of 'hateful old age' and the other of death; it is better to die young and thus to avoid the suffering which will come sooner or later, because 'there is no one to whom Zeus would not give many sorrows'.⁴⁴ The story of Cleobis and Biton, on whom Hera bestowed early death as a special divine blessing, bears witness to the popularity of this idea.⁴⁵

This attitude to early death is more easily understood when seen against the popular belief according to which human life is nothing but a long series of ups and downs. One need not go so far as Pindar, Herodotus and Sophocles to illustrate this view. Take, for example, the Homeric parable of the jars of Zeus put in the mouth of Achilles in *Iliad* 24, which begins with the words: 'this is the lot the gods have spun for miserable men, that they should live in pain'.⁴⁶ There are only two kinds of gifts that Zeus can bestow on mortal men: either evil mixed with good or evil unmixed, so that the life in which evil is mixed with good should be recognized as a normal one. Suffering therefore should be accepted as a necessary component of human life, and it is characteristic that the life-stories of two old men, Priam and Peleus, are adduced to illustrate this idea.⁴⁷

This is not yet to say that man should try to escape suffering by committing suicide or should accept his lot passively, without trying to make something of his life. Thus, the Heracles of Euripides, whose involuntary murder of his own wife and children caused him to consider suicide, eventually arrives at the conclusion that this would be the act of a coward, because 'the man who cannot bear up under the blows of fortune would not be able to bear up under the weapon of a man either'.⁴⁸ The Heracles of Bacchylides comments on the sad life story of Meleager told to him in the Underworld in a similar vein: 'For mortals it would be best not to be born nor to look at the light of the sun. But those who grieve about this cannot act, and so one must talk about what can be done'.⁴⁹ True, life is full of toil and suffering, but man should be able not only to endure but also to trans-

⁴³ Theog. 1013–14 W.

⁴⁴ Mimn. 2.15–16 W; cf. Theog. 767–68 W; Soph. *O.C.* 1224–38.

⁴⁵ Hdt. 1.31; cf. 7.46.3–4.

⁴⁶ *Il.* 24.525–26; cf. *Od.* 18.130–34

⁴⁷ Note that the epithet *polutlētōs*, 'much-suffering', which comes very close to Odysseus' epithet *polutlas*, is applied in the *Odyssey* to old men in general; see *Od.* 11.38.

⁴⁸ Eur. *H.F.* 1349–60; cf. 1347–8.

⁴⁹ Bacchyl. 5.160–64.

form this toil and suffering into a supreme achievement. 'To make of this suffering a glorious life'—these words of the deified Heracles of Sophocles, addressed to his friend Philoctetes when the latter is sunk in the agony of despair, sum up everything the heroic life is about.⁵⁰

Undoubtedly, this is the kind of life of which the Homeric Odysseus can be an example. As distinct from the Iliadic hero, who sets an example of how one ought to die, all Odysseus' life-experience demonstrates how one ought to live. Earthy and prosaic as he is, Odysseus manages to pass through all the tests that life puts before him: to contrive the escape from the Cyclops' cave, to abstain from eating the flesh of the sacred cattle of Helios, and to endure the crowning humiliation of living as a beggar in his own house. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Odysseus was able to overcome everything life had in store for him not in spite of being earthy and prosaic but because of these qualities, for to be earthy and prosaic (a feature, we should remember, shared by Heracles) is after all nothing else than being human.

Much as has been written of the choice of Achilles, one should not forget that Odysseus too had to make a choice. Yet, as distinct from Achilles whose choice is between early death and long life, Odysseus chooses between human life and immortality, offered to him by Calypso. In full conformity with popular Greek ethics, Odysseus is represented as content with his lot and preferring to immortality his own life even if it is a life of toil and suffering.⁵¹ In this, he proves as exemplary a hero as only a Greek hero can be.⁵²

We saw that Mimnermus made provision for two fates of death (*kēres*)—that of early death and that of death in old age. Now in the *Iliad* Achilles too had two *kēres* of his own, one of early death in battle accompanied by everlasting glory, the other of the peaceful but inglorious death of old age, and eventually chose the former. This is, however, not the kind of choice Achilles is prepared to repeat in the *Odyssey*. On meeting the ghost of Achilles in the Underworld, Odysseus proclaims that, as distinct from himself, whose life is full of sorrows (αἰὲν ἔχω κακά), Achilles is the most blessed (μακάριστος) of men, for even when still alive he was honoured by the Achaeans 'equally to gods' and after his death he holds a princely position among the dead. Achilles' answer is illuminating:

⁵⁰ Soph. *Phil.* 1422.

⁵¹ *Od.* 5.202–24; 7.254–8; 23.333–7; cf. 9.25–36.

⁵² Characteristically, it was Odysseus who, again together with Heracles, was adopted as an exemplary figure in the vein of Prodicus' exegesis by the fifth-century philosopher Antisthenes and later by both the Cynics and the Stoics. The reasons why these two were chosen as a philosophers' ideal lie in their self-restraint, endurance of hardships, disregard for indignities and humiliation, and in their readiness to serve the common good. See Stanford 1963, 96ff. and 121ff.

'Nay, speak not comfortably to me of death, oh great Odysseus. Rather would I live on ground as the hireling of another (θητευόμεν ἄλλῳ), with a landless man who had no great livelihood, than bear sway among all the dead that be departed'.⁵³

The verb θητεύω, 'to be a serf or labourer', used by Achilles here, is the same that designates the labours Poseidon and Apollo endured while serving the Trojan king Laomedon (above). As we saw, this verb can function as a synonym of ἀθλέω, 'to labour' proper; note also that the motif of serving one's inferior is closely associated with the idea of labours in general and the labours of Heracles in particular (see Section 1). This seems to indicate that Achilles' choice in the Underworld is not just, as is usually supposed, a choice between heroic death and unheroic life but one between two kinds of heroism.⁵⁴ While the Achilles of the *Iliad*, in full conformity with the ethos of this poem, chooses early death in battle and the everlasting glory by which it is accompanied, the Achilles of the *Odyssey* prefers the life of labours.

To be sure, neither the *Iliad* nor the *Odyssey* make any provision whatsoever for the kind of immortality suggested by the hero-cult.⁵⁵ This is not yet to say that the ideas associated with this phenomenon were unfamiliar to Homer. Indeed, if the present interpretation of the *Odyssey*'s evidence is correct, there seems reason to suppose that the idea that the life of labours must needs be crowned with an appropriate reward, characteristic as it is of the popular Greek attitude to the phenomenon of hero-worship, is at least as early as the Homeric *Odyssey*. This is not necessarily to say that this idea had been there from the very beginning of the *Odyssey* tradition: the alternate epithet *polumētis*, 'of many devices', is no less frequently applied to Odysseus than the epithet *polutlas*, 'much-enduring', not to mention the fact that not all of Odysseus' adventures would readily fit the pattern of labours.⁵⁶ What is important, however, is that this is the overall interpretation to which these adventures were eventually subsumed in our *Odyssey*, and we

⁵³ *Od.* 11.488–91.

⁵⁴ Cf. Griffin 1987, 95–96: 'We must hear in this scene the retort of the *Odyssey* to the glamorous and passionate heroism of the *Iliad*; they would sing a very different tune, the poet suggests, when they really faced the facts of death. The heroism of the survivor is not such a small thing'.

⁵⁵ There is good reason to suppose that *Od.* 11.602–604, commenting on the emergence of Heracles among the ghosts of the Underworld to the effect that this is only a 'phantom' whereas Heracles himself dwells with the gods (cf. Hes. *Th.* 954–55; fr. 25.26–33; 229.6–13), is an interpolation. On this passage and the apotheosis of Heracles in general see M. West 1985, 130, 134, 169.

⁵⁶ On an interesting attempt to reconcile Odysseus' cunning with his endurance by interpreting these two qualities in terms of the development of character see Rutherford 1986.

have seen that this interpretation is consistent in that it spreads over all of Odysseus' life-experience, while his meetings with Achilles and Heracles in the Underworld were obviously designed to deliver the same message.

To sum up, either Homeric poem offers its own version of heroism. In the *Iliad* being a hero amounts to readiness to meet death on the battlefield;⁵⁷ the sense in which the words 'heroism' and 'hero' are used today ultimately descends from this concept. According to the *Odyssey* a hero is one who is prepared to go through life enduring toil and suffering. Whatever the reasons for this difference,⁵⁸ there can be little doubt that it is the *Odyssey's* version of heroism that conforms to the popular Greek attitude to the phenomenon of hero-worship.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ It is doubtful whether Hesiod's account of the Race of Heroes as found in *Work and Days* reflects a belief different from that found in the *Iliad*. According to Hesiod, while the people of the golden and the silver races were transformed after death into spirits (*daimones*), the people of the race of heroes, which embraced all those who fought at Thebes and Troy, either died in battle or were transferred to the Isles of the Blessed: see *Op.* 166–73. Whatever the idea of immortality enshrined in the myth of the Isles of the Blessed (on this subject see especially S. West in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 227), it is clear from Hesiod that it does not concern those who fell in war; see further M. West 1978, 192 (on v. 166) and 186 (on v. 141) and above, ch. 15, 150–53, and ch. 17, 175–76.

⁵⁸ As is generally recognized, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* considerably differ in their treatment of religious and moral issues. This difference is alternately approached either in terms of historical development or in those of the social or genre standing of both poems. For discussion see, e.g., Guthrie 1954, 117 ff.; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 27 ff. and above, pp. 88–89.

⁵⁹ An early version of this paper was read in May 1991 at a colloquium held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in honour of Prof. Ra'anana Meridor. I have much pleasure in dedicating it to her.

21 Patterns of Human Error in Homer

It has become habitual to approach Homeric man's mental functioning with the categories used today, only to show how different this man was from the later Greek and, moreover, from the modern individual. The studies in Homer's mental terminology begun by Bruno Snell and other German scholars before World War II illustrate this tendency. Although the scholarly value of these studies, which have led us to realize that the Homeric vocabulary lacks terms explicitly designating the person as a whole, is incontestable, in everything concerning the better understanding of Homeric man their effect has been, paradoxically enough, rather negative. Indeed, insofar as such ideas as 'self', 'soul', 'character' are said to be irrelevant to Homer, and what is proposed instead is a loose conglomerate of the so-called mental organs, Homeric man is turned into an incognizable entity altogether estranged from everything understood as human today or in classical Greece. At the same time, the essential humanity of Homeric man is immediately felt by every reader of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, and the incompatibility of this experience with the image created by terminological speculations is strong enough to call in question the relevance of the results obtained through the terminological approach.¹

The same seems to be true of the interpretation of Homeric man in terms of modern psychology. The psychological approach, initiated by M.P. Nilsson and further developed by E.R. Dodds, emphasized such features of Homeric psychology as the dependence of human behaviour on divine intervention and the predominant part played by the *thumos* in every aspect of Homeric man's functioning. It has been held that the actions and states of mind caused by the gods cannot be regarded as part of the self, that the *thumos* must have enjoyed such a degree of independence that it too could not be felt as part of the self, and that 'all departures from normal human behaviour whose causes are not immediately perceived ... are ascribed to a supernatural agency'.² As a result, today we know much more about the abnormalities of Homeric man's behaviour than about the norm from which these abnormalities deviate. It is not surprising, then, that the theory that Homeric man was psychologically or even anthropologically different

¹ For criticism of the terminological approach see especially Schwabl 1954; Lesky 1961, 5–11; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 2–3, 8–10; Sharples 1983; Gaskin 1990; Williams 1993, 21–49.

² Dodds 1951, 13.

from the classical Greek, let alone the modern individual, has taken a strong hold over many current studies in Homeric psychology.³

In all these, little justice seems to have been done to the terms of mental behaviour used by Homer himself. To be sure, Homer's mental terminology has been an object of intensive study for more than half a century. Almost invariably, however, Homer's terms have been treated in isolation from later developments: like precious jewels, Homeric words are valued for their own sake, apparently because of the tacit assumption that they cannot be commensurable with terms of later epochs. This presumption is shared today both by the adherents of the terminological approach and by the scholars who have challenged this influential trend, in that the latter tend to deny that the terminology can adequately express Homeric man's mental experience. It is however far from proved that Homeric terms of mental experience reject translation into later categories: on the surface of it, the contrary would rather seem to be true. Indeed, as soon as we admit, together with the opponents of the terminological approach, that there is nothing deficient about Homeric man's mental functioning, we shall also have to admit that the terms in which this functioning is described accounted for it no less effectively than those of any other historical period. K.J. Dover's sound treatment spares me any lengthy discussion here.⁴ It seems indeed that what mainly prevents us from taking a balanced view of Homeric man is the feeling of cultural superiority with which we approach cultures different from our own, only to impose on them our own inherited attitudes. But if we proceed from the Homeric terms themselves rather than from our own notions and examine these terms in their mutual relationships, there is reason to suppose that it will become much easier to bring them into correspondence with the terms in use in other historical periods. The present study proposes to apply this kind of approach to Homer's terms of human error.

³ See, for example, Jaynes 1982. Of course, Dodds, who introduced the 'irrational' only to supplement the 'rational', not to supersede it (cf. Finkelberg 2012), cannot be held responsible for the far-reaching conclusion that the Iliadic hero 'did not have any ego whatsoever' (73), or that Homeric gods were 'organizations of the central nervous system' (74), or that Homeric man 'did not have subjectivity as do we', or that 'in distinction to our own subjective conscious minds, we can call the mentality of the Mycenaeans a *bicameral mind*' (75; Jaynes' emphasis). The fact remains, however, that in his treatment of Homeric psychology Jaynes does lean heavily upon *The Greeks and the Irrational*.

⁴ Dover 1974, 150–51, 156–60.

1

The term that most frequently emerges in connection with human error in Homer is *atē*: it is generally agreed that the Homeric meaning of this term would be ‘folly’, ‘blindness’, ‘infatuation’. A *locus classicus* illustrating how Homeric man would account for behaviour deriving from *atē* is, of course, Agamemnon’s famous apology in *Iliad* 19.85–90:

‘Oft have the Achaeans spoken thus to me, and upbraided me; but it is not I who am the cause (ἐγὼ δ’ οὐκ αἰτιός εἰμι), but Zeus and Destiny and Erinys who walks in the darkness, who put into my soul fierce *atē* (φρεσὶν ἔμβαλον ἄγριον ἄτην) on the day when in the assembly I, even I, bereft Achilles of his prize. What could I do? it is God who accomplishes all’.⁵

As Dodds has shown, Agamemnon’s explanation of his insulting of Achilles can also account for the other instances where mistaken or wrong behaviour is explained as due to *atē*.⁶ The characteristic features of this kind of behaviour are a temporary lack of understanding; attribution of the act to an external agency, usually the gods; and the fact that the agent is not recognized either by himself or by others as an autonomous causer of what he has done.⁷ The question however is whether this widespread pattern can account for the whole range of erroneous behaviour in Homer.

Compare *Odyssey* 1.32–43. Zeus complains that mortals usually hold the gods responsible for their misfortunes, although more often than not they themselves are to be blamed. To demonstrate this, he adduces the example of Aegisthus:

‘Lo you now, how vainly mortal men do blame (αἰτιώωνται) the gods! For of us they say comes evil, whereas they even of themselves, through their own *atasthaliai*, have sorrows beyond what is ordained (οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ / σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὑπὲρ μόνον ἄλγε’ ἔχουσιν). Even as of late Aegisthus, beyond what was ordained (ὑπὲρ μόνον), took to him the wedded wife of the son of Atreus and killed her lord on his return, and that with sheer doom before his eyes (εἰδὼς αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον), since we had warned him by the embassy of Hermes the keen-sighted, the slayer of Argos, that he should neither kill the man, nor woo his wife. For

⁵ The English quotations from the *Iliad* are given in the translation by A. Lang, W. Leaf, and E. Myers, and those from the *Odyssey* in the translation by S.H. Butcher and A. Lang, both slightly adapted.

⁶ Dodds 1951, 2–18.

⁷ The latter aspect has become so firmly associated with the meaning of the word *atē* that it even caused Aristarchus to change Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔνεκ’ ἄτης at *Il.* 3.100 (repeated also at 6.356 and 24.28) into Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔνεκ’ ἀρχῆς; he argued that it would be inappropriate for Menelaus, the speaker of these words, to excuse Paris.

the son of Atreus shall be avenged at the hand of Orestes, so soon as he shall come to man's estate and long for his own country. So spoke Hermes, yet he prevailed not on the heart of Aegisthus, for all his good will (ἀλλ' οὐ φρένας Αἰγίσθοιο / πείθ' ἀγαθὰ φρονέων); but now he has paid one price for all'.

It can be seen that Agamemnon's apology and the anti-apology of Aegisthus act as mirror-images: Agamemnon, whose action was provoked by gods and by destiny (*moira*), is not held responsible for his act, whereas Aegisthus, who acted against gods' advice and against destiny (*hyper moron*), is fully responsible for what he did. Yet, while Agamemnon's apology occupies the place of honour in every standard treatment of Homer's view of man, the anti-apology of Aegisthus is usually seen as relevant to the sphere of ethics rather than that of anthropology.⁸ This is obviously not good enough. If we wish to give an adequate picture of Homer's view of human person we must look for systematic rather than statistical regularities, because frequency of occurrence cannot in itself supply sufficient ground for the claim that a given view is the only one relevant to the epics. That is to say, if there are even isolated cases in Homer which present human behaviour as not falling into current patterns of interpretation, our picture of Homeric man can only be balanced if it includes these cases together with the statistically prevalent ones.

As follows from Zeus' speech, Homer's word for the kind of behaviour displayed by Aegisthus is *atasthalīē*. Now although the speech of Zeus is seen by many scholars as representing a later stage of moral thought (see n. 8), *atasthalīē* itself (in Homer always in the plural) is a well-established epic word. It occurs eleven times in Homer: five times it designates the behaviour of Penelope's suitors (*Od.* 21.146; 22.317 and 416; 23.67; 24.458), twice that of Odysseus' companions (*Od.* 1.7; 12.300), and once each that of Aegisthus (*Od.* 1.34), of Odysseus (*Od.* 10.437), of Hector (*Il.* 22.104), and of the Seven against Thebes (*Il.* 4.409). Its cognates, the adjective ἀτάσθαλος and the verb ἀταστάλλω, designate the behaviour of the Suitors, of Odysseus' female slaves, of Euryalus the Phaeacian, of the Epeans in Nestor's reminiscences, of the Trojans, of Achilles, and of the giants.⁹

Yet to say that Aegisthus' behaviour differs from that of Agamemnon in that while the latter was due to *atē* the former was due to *atasthalīē* is to say almost nothing, because in fact we do not know what *atasthalīē* stands for. The usual

⁸ It is seen as representing a later stage of ethical thought in Jaeger 1947, 143; Heubeck 1954, 81–86; Dodds 1951, 32–33; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 28–29; for the most recent discussion see Friedrich 1991, 18–19.

⁹ ἀτάσθαλος *Il.* 11.695; 13.634; 22.418; *Od.* 3.207 = 17.588; 4.693; 6.60; 7.166; 16.86, 93; 18.139, 143; 20.370; 22.7, 314; 24.282, 352; cf. *H.Ap.* 67; *H.Herm.* 296; *H.* 15; ἀταστάλλω *Od.* 18.57; 19.88.

translation ‘recklessness’ is simply a convention, and Hesychius’ etymology connecting *atasthaliē* with *atē*, indicative as it is of a general tendency to ascribe all Homeric errors to *atē*, does not stand the test of linguistics.¹⁰ Although it is true that the adjective *atasthalos* is often associated in Homer with *hubris* and its cognates (which is especially true of the *Odyssey*), I cannot agree with J.B. Hainsworth that this association ‘is the best indication of the sense of this word’.¹¹ Note that the two terms are associated only when the behaviour deriving from *atasthaliē* is seen as morally reprehensible—as, for example, in the case of the Suitors. This is not so, however, in the case of Hector whose *atasthaliē* consists in keeping his troops outside the walls of Troy or in that of Odysseus whose *atasthaliē* consists in bringing his companions into the Cyclops’ cave; accordingly, *hubris* is not mentioned in these contexts. This seems to indicate that *atasthaliē* as such is a morally neutral term which can be qualified through *hubris*, not substituted by it.¹² In view of this, it seems safer to try to arrive at the Homeric meaning of the word by following its broader usage, both thematic and formulaic.

In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the acts deriving from *atasthaliē* are usually represented as having been committed notwithstanding the fact that the agent was explicitly warned not to take a particular course of action. This is true not only of Aegisthus who was warned by Hermes not to kill Agamemnon and marry his wife, but also of the Suitors warned by Leodes not to sleep with Odysseus’ female slaves, of Odysseus’ companions whom he warned not to touch Helios’ sacred cattle, of Odysseus himself, asked by his companions not to risk their lives on the Cyclops island, and of Hector advised by Polydamas not to take the troops outside the walls of Troy.¹³ Accordingly, they all knew or at least were aware of the possibility that the course of action they were taking could result in disaster.

¹⁰ See Chantraine 1968, s.v. ἀτασθαλίη.

¹¹ In Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, on 8.166; cf. S. West on 1.7.

¹² See ὑβρίζοντες ἀτάσθαλα μηχανόωντο *Il.* 11.695 (Nestor of the Epeans); cf. *Od.* 3.207; 17.588; 20.370 (of the Suitors); cf. also Hes. *Op.* 241; ἀτάσθαλον ὕβριν *Od.* 16.86, 24.352 (of the Suitors); cf. Hes. *Op.* 134; ὑβρισταὶ καὶ ἀτάσθαλοι *Od.* 24.282 (of the Suitors). The same holds good of the expression ἀτασθαλίησι κακῆσιν at *Od.* 12.300 (of Odysseus’ companions) and 24.458 (of the Suitors). It is only in post-Homeric Greek that *atasthaliē* and its cognates start to designate the extreme form of presumptuousness involving open impiety, see, e.g., Hes. *Op.* 134, 241, 261; *Th.* 164, 209, 515, 996; fr. 30.16 M-W; Theog. 736, 749; Hdt. 2.111.2; 3.49.2, 80.4; 7.34.2; 8.109.3; 9.78.2; 8.

¹³ The verb οὐ πείθειν/πείθεσθαι frequently appears in this connection, see *Il.* 22.103 ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην· ἦ τ’ ἄν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν (Hector of himself) = *Od.* 9.228 (Odysseus of himself). Cf. *Od.* 9.500 ὥς φάσαν, ἀλλ’ οὐ πείθον ἐμὸν μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν (Odysseus of himself); *Od.* 1.42–43 ἀλλ’ οὐ φρένας Αἰγίσθοιο / πείθ’ ἀγαθὰ φρονέων (sc. Hermes); *Od.* 22.316 ἀλλὰ μοι οὐ πείθοντο κακῶν ἅπο χειρας ἔχεσθαι (of the Suitors; cf. 24.458). Cf. also *Il.* 4.408–09.

Not so, however, as far as the behaviour deriving from *atē* is concerned. Compare, for example, Helen's apology as pronounced by Penelope in *Odyssey* 23.218–24:

'Nay even Argive Helen, daughter of Zeus, would not have lain with a stranger, and taken him for a lover, had she known (εἰ ᾔδῃ) that the warlike sons of the Achaeans would bring her home again to her own dear country. Howsoever, it was the god that set upon her this shameful deed (τὴν δ' ἣ τοι ῥέξαι θεὸς ὥρορεν ἔργον ἀεικέες); not ever, before that, did she lay up in her heart this *atē* (τὴν δ' ἄτην οὐ πρόσθεν ἔῳ ἐγκάτθετο θυμῷ), a bitter *atē*, whence on us too came sorrow'.

Like Agamemnon's act, that of Helen is described as due to *atē* and to divine intervention.¹⁴ But it is also said of Helen that she would never have eloped with Paris had she known the consequences of her deed. This compares well with the following episode from the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus falls asleep on the island of Thrinacia, his companions take advantage of his absence and slaughter the sacred cattle of Helios. Later, Odysseus refers to his unfortunate sleep as having been sent him by the gods εἰς ἄτην.¹⁵ The use of *atē* in this specific context is often seen as close to the post-Homeric meaning of the word, that is, as meaning 'ruin', 'disaster', rather than 'blindness', 'folly'.¹⁶ The obvious reason for this interpretation is that it seems grossly incongruous to treat so innocent an action as falling asleep on the same plane as Helen's elopement with Paris or Agamemnon's insulting of Achilles. However, this is to miss the point at which all these cases concur. Just as neither Helen nor Agamemnon were aware of the possible consequences of their deeds, so also Odysseus did not reflect that his absence could be exploited for the committing of a sacrilege. This seems to have been reason enough for Homer to qualify all of them as *atē*. Consider also the way in which Homer describes the *atē* of Oineus, who neglected to bring offerings to Artemis: 'whether he forgot or marked it not; and therein he sinned (lit. 'committed an act of *atē*') greatly in his heart'.¹⁷ That the lack of foreknowledge is essential to

¹⁴ Cf. *Od.* 4.261–62, where Helen's behaviour is also explained as due to *atē*. Homer's characterization of Agamemnon's behaviour as deriving from *atē* is even more consistent: the state of *atē* is ascribed to Agamemnon no less than eleven times, more than to all the other named individuals taken together, see Adkins 1982, 307 with n. 33.

¹⁵ *Od.* 12.372, cf. 10.68.

¹⁶ See Dodds 1951, 19 n. 17; Doyle 1984, 18; Verdenius 1985, on Hes. *Op.* 215.

¹⁷ *Il.* 9.537 ἢ λάθεται ἢ οὐκ ἐνόησεν· ἄσαστο δὲ μέγα θυμῷ. As Wyatt 1982, 252 correctly emphasized, 'Oineus' *atē* brought on the Calydonian boar and the subsequent trouble between the Aetolians and the Couretes'.

Homer's idea of *atē* can also be seen from the fact that the unintentional homicide can well be accounted for as a result of *atē*.¹⁸

Thus, although their deeds may in themselves be wrong or even shameful, this is not necessarily to say that either Helen or Agamemnon intended to cause what actually resulted from their behaviour, namely, the Trojan War and the heaviest defeat the Achaeans suffered in the course of it. This appears to be the reason why both of them, although they may indeed be blamed by themselves and others for their deeds, are not seen as responsible for their consequences.¹⁹ This is not so, however, in the case of those whose errors are ascribed to *atasthalīē*: in that they were warned of the possible consequences of their deeds and still committed them they are set apart from those whose errors were committed under the influence of *atē*.²⁰

In describing the *atasthalīē* of the Seven against Thebes in the *Iliad* and that of Odysseus' companions in the *Odyssey* Homer uses essentially the same formula, κείνοι [or: αὐτῶν] δὲ [or: γὰρ] σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο (*Il.* 4.409; *Od.* 1.7), 'they perished by their own *atasthalīē*', a fact that indicates the traditional character of the expression.²¹ It seems that τούτου γὰρ καὶ κείνοι ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο at *Odyssey* 10.437, adapted so as to describe the disastrous consequences of Odysseus' *atasthalīē* on the island of the Cyclops, should also belong here. That both σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσιν at *Odyssey* 1.3 and νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ὤλεσα λαὸν ἀτασθαλίησιν ἐμῇσιν at *Iliad* 22.104, although metrically different, return to the basic semantic pattern of the formula shows that

¹⁸ *Il.* 24.480–81. Note also that the lack of foreknowledge allows to understand how the word *atē* evolved after Homer to mean 'unforeseen disaster'; on *atē* as 'unforeseen disaster' see Jaeger 1960, 319–24.

¹⁹ See especially *Il.* 3.164–65, in which Priam absolves Helen from responsibility for the Trojan War, and *Il.* 19.270–74, Achilles absolving Agamemnon from responsibility for the Achaean defeat on similar grounds. Characteristically, the *Odyssey* treatment of Aegisthus' partner Clytaemnestra in the phrase ἐμήσατο ἔργον αἰεκές at 11.429 (cf. also 3.235, 4.91–92, 11.430 and 439) is in clear contrast to τὴν ... ῥέξαι θεὸς ὥροεν ἔργον αἰεκές, a description of Helen at 23.222, in that while the former clearly presupposes a premeditated action the latter does not.

²⁰ It is true that Patroclus was advised by Achilles not to get close to the walls of Troy, cf. Heubeck 1954, 83. Yet Patroclus' case differs from those involving *atasthalīē* in that, while the latter invariably emphasize the agent's disagreement with the advice rather than his or her being oblivious of it (see above, n. 13), Patroclus accepts Achilles' advice but later forgets it: νήπιος· εἰ δὲ ἔπος Πηληϊάδαο φύλαξεν / ἧ τ' ἄν ὑπέκφυγε κῆρα κακὴν μέλανος θανάτοιο (*Il.* 16.686–87). This is why his mistake is ascribed to *atē* rather than *atasthalīē*, see also *ibid.* 685, 805.

²¹ 'The word-order [of *Od.* 1.7], genitive before possessive adjective, is quite abnormal; presumably this reflects the modification of a formulaic prototype like *Il.* 4.409', S. West in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988), *ad loc.*; cf. Kirk 1985, on *Il.* 4.409.

these two expressions should be taken as its modifications. It may be inferred, then, that ‘to perish by one’s own *atasthaliē*’ is essential to Homer’s understanding of the term.²² In other words, there is reason to suppose that the agent’s responsibility as proclaimed by Zeus in the prologue of the *Odyssey* belongs with the traditional meaning of the word *atasthaliē*. The difference between this meaning and that of *atē* cannot be overemphasized: while *atē* usually comes from the outside, *atasthaliē* is always one’s own.²³

Another formula to be considered is ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάσθαι / μηχανάσθε / μηχανόωντες / μηχανόωντο ‘to plan acts of *atasthaliē*’, which occurs five times in the *Odyssey* and once in the *Iliad*.²⁴ Since the verb μηχανάσθαι with its active participle μηχανόωντες invariably means ‘to contrive’, ‘to design’, ‘to plan’, it is obvious that the acts committed out of *atasthaliē* are seen as having been committed deliberately and after premeditation. How one can plan ‘his own *atasthaliē*’ is made clear from the case of Odysseus’ companions. That their slaughtering of the cattle of Helios is interpreted as due to *atasthaliē* can already be seen from *Odyssey* 1.7–8: ‘They perished because of their own *atasthaliai*. Foolish ones, they ate the cattle of Helios son of Hyperion’. Later in the poem Eurylochus, after having been warned by Odysseus not to touch the cattle ‘through bad *atasthaliai*’ (*Od.* 12.300), takes advantage of Odysseus’ nap and persuades the others to disobey their leader. His reasoning as presented in *Odyssey* 12.341–51 is as follows:

‘Truly every shape of death is hateful to wretched mortals, but to die of hunger and so meet doom is most pitiful of all. Nay come, we will drive off the best of the kine of Helios and will do sacrifice to the deathless gods who keep wide heaven. And if we may yet reach Ithaca, our own country, forthwith will we rear a rich shrine to Helios Hyperion, and therein would we set many a choice offering. But if he be somewhat wroth for his cattle with straight horns, and is faint to wreck our ship, and the other gods follow his desire, I wish rather with

²² See Jones 1954, 9; H.W. Norheider in *LfrgE*, s.v. ἀτασθαλίη; Heubeck in Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989, on 12.320–23. Cf. Jaeger 1960, 322.

²³ According to Dodds 1951, 5, ‘the agents productive of *atē*, where they are specified, seem always to be supernatural beings’. The two *Odyssey* examples of *atē* as caused by wine (11.61 and 21.295–98) are treated by Dodds as a special case which does not disprove the rule, and he regards the *atē* produced in Dolon by Hector (*Il.* 10.391) as ‘a symptom of Hector’s own condition of (divinely inspired) ἄτη’, *ibid.* 19 n. 20, cf. Lloyd-Jones 1983, 23. However, as Doyle 1984, 21 n. 29 remarks, ‘the difficulty with this view is that ἄτη is never ascribed to Hector’, see below; moreover, Hector is actually described as producing *atē* in others in *Il.* 18.311–13 as well. In view of this, it seems safer to regard *atē* as being usually caused by an external factor, whether a god, or a fellow-man, or wine.

²⁴ *Il.* 11.695; *Od.* 3.207; 16.93; 17.588; 18.143; 20.370; cf. Hes. *Op.* 241. Cf. also κακὰ μηχανάσθαι *Od.* 3.213; 16.134; 21.375; ἀεικέα μηχανόωντο *Od.* 20.394; 22.432.

one gulp at the wave to cast my life away than be slowly straitened to death in a desert isle
(βούλομ' ἅπαξ πρὸς κύμα χανῶν ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὀλέσσαι / ἢ δηθὰ στρεύγεσθαι ἐὼν ἐν νήσῳ
ἐρήμῃ).

Not even a word of an *atē* clouding the consciousness of the starving men, of gods taking away their understanding. Eurylochus' pondering which of the two alternatives before him is preferable can only mean that the subsequent slaughtering and eating of the tabooed cattle was envisaged by Homer as the result of a conscious and deliberate choice: this was, as simply as possible, a calculated risk. Thus, *atasthalīē* is firmly associated in Homer with the ideas of foreknowledge, responsibility, and planning, and *atē* is equally firmly associated with their opposites. It follows from this that *atē* and *atasthalīē* were envisaged not only as not identical but, in fact, as semantically opposite: while *atē* presupposes an error which originates in the irrational, *atasthalīē* presupposes an error originating in the rational.

2

It is highly symptomatic that current Homeric anthropology makes no provision for error originating in the rational. Although the tension between the rational and the irrational in Homeric man's behaviour has often been the subject of discussion, the assumption that usually underlies this discussion is that all wrong and bad behaviour is treated by Homer as due to the irrational and all right and good behaviour as due to the rational. This is true of E.R. Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational*, in which all wrong behaviour is treated as psychologically abnormal and therefore as deriving from irrational factors; of H. Lloyd-Jones' *The Justice of Zeus*, in which *atē*, understood as one's yielding to his or her irrational drives, is treated as the only source of error in Homer; of A. Dihle's *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity*, according to which the early Greek view of human behaviour can be exhaustively accounted for by the so-called bipartite psychology, based on the interaction of the rational and irrational factors, and error as the prevailing of the latter over the former.²⁵ In

²⁵ Dodds 1951, 1–18; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 8–24; Dihle 1982, 20–47; Jaeger 1960, 319–24, seems to be the only one to have recognized that Homer makes provision both for errors that involve the lack of foreknowledge and for those that do not. However, he takes *atē* as an inclusive term comprising both kinds of error: to claim this is to ignore the fact that the Homeric vocabulary possesses a word for error involving foreknowledge.

view of this, it seems especially important that the sphere of *atasthalīē* in Homer should be defined as precisely as possible.

On the surface of it, the pattern of *atasthalīē*, implying as it does the agent's awareness of the right course of action, fits in well with the later Greek concept of *akrasia*, or intemperance. Only recently, *akrasia* has been restored for Homeric anthropology by Richard Gaskin, who showed that Snell's contention that Homeric heroes are incapable of *akrasia* is unwarranted. Gaskin's examples include Helen in the *Iliad* who continues to share her bed with Paris despite being aware that he is unworthy of her affection; Achilles who knows that his persisting in anger is wrong but cannot help it; Hector who flees from Achilles although he knows that he should go and meet him.²⁶ According to this pattern, a mistaken or wrong act would be due to one's inability to exercise control over his or her instincts, appetites and passions and thus to follow what one knows to be the right course of action, and a correct or good act would result from one's victory in this struggle. How would *atē* and *atasthalīē* stand in respect of this pattern? The important caveat in this connection is that while *atē* and *atasthalīē* are Homeric words, *akrasia* is not. In view of this, it is important to identify the pattern after which Homer's descriptions of acratīc behaviour are modelled. The Homeric heroes' interaction with their *thumos* would seem to supply such a pattern.

Consider Odysseus' deliberation within himself in *Odyssey* 20.9–24. Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, witnesses his female slaves sharing their beds with the Suitors. His reaction is as follows:

Then the *thumos* of Odysseus was stirred within his breast, and much he pondered in his mind and soul (πολλὰ δὲ μερμήριζε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν), whether he should leap forth upon them and deal death to each, or suffer them to lie with the proud suitors, now for the last and latest time. And his heart (*kradiē*) growled sullenly within him ... Then he smote upon his breast and rebuked his own heart, saying: 'Endure, my heart; yea, a baser thing you once did bear, on that day when the Cyclops, unrestrained in fury, devoured the mighty men of my company; but still you did endure till my cunning found a way for you from out the cave, where you thought to die'. So spoke he, chiding his own heart (*ētor*) within his breast, and his heart verily abode steadfast in obedience to his word (τῷ δὲ μάλ' ἐν πείσῃ κραδίη μένε τετληῖα / νωλεμέως). But he himself lay tossing this way and that.

26 Gaskin 1990, 10–13.

Odysseus' case offers an excellent example of the kind of behaviour which was later defined as eucratic, temperate. Had he followed the drive of his heart²⁷ and begun his revenge prematurely (in which case he would have surely been killed by the Suitors), this would have been an example of acratic, or intemperate, behaviour; this is what Achilles would probably have done in his place.²⁸ Compare indeed Achilles' reaction to Agamemnon's insult in *Iliad* 1.188–95:

... and grief came upon Peleus' son, and his heart (*ētor*) within his shaggy breast was divided in counsel (διάνδιχα μερμήριζεν), whether to draw his keen blade from his thigh and set the company aside and to slay Atrides, or to assuage his anger and restrain his *thumos*. While yet he doubted thereof in his mind and soul (ἦτος ὃ ταῦθ' ὥρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν), and was drawing his great sword from his sheath, Athena came to him from heaven...

As the episode clearly shows, if it had not been for the intervention of Athena, Achilles would hardly have been able to restrain his *thumos* at this critical moment. This is consistent with Homer's general characterization of this hero. Indeed, such expressions as θυμὸν ἴσχειν, δαμάζειν, ἐρητύειν, while not numerous in the epics, are almost invariably associated with Achilles.²⁹ Thus, not only in the specific passage pointed out by Gaskin but throughout the *Iliad* Achilles affords an example of acratic behaviour.³⁰

Since the acts of *akrasia*, resulting as they do from one's lack of self-control, obviously cannot be planned in advance, but the acts of *atastaliē*, as is clearly

²⁷ It is irrelevant whether the object of the interaction is one's *thumos* or heart (ἦτορ, καρδίη): when appearing in the psychological (rather than physiological) context these words are employed as functional synonyms which can easily replace each other in accordance with metrical conditions. See further Jahn 1987, 182–94, 293–98. See also Finkelberg 1998, 34–48.

²⁸ See also above, ch. 20, 220.

²⁹ For the most part in *Iliad* 9, see σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν / ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι vv. 255–56, Odysseus to Achilles; δάμασον θυμὸν μέγαν v. 496, Phoenix to Achilles; τοῦ δέ τ' ἐρητύεται καρδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ / ... σοὶ δ' ἄληκτόν τε κακόν τε / θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι θεοὶ θέσαν vv. 635–37, Ajax to Achilles, cf. also vv. 462–63. Characteristically, the expression 'to yield to one's *thumos*' also appears mainly in this book, see σὺ δὲ σῶ μεγαλήτορι θυμῷ / εἵξας vv. 109–10, of Agamemnon; εἵξας ᾧ θυμῷ v. 598, of Meleager; cf. 24.42–43; *Od.* 5.126.

³⁰ Cf. Griffin 1980, 73–76. Lloyd-Jones 1983, 23, takes Achilles' mentioning of ἄται in his speech addressed to Agamemnon after their reconciliation (*Il.* 19.270) as meaning that both Agamemnon and Achilles acted under the influence of *atē*, but I agree with Adkins 1982, 308 that the passage should be taken as relating to Agamemnon alone. *Il.* 9.510–12, where Phoenix seems to threaten Achilles with *atē* unless he accepts Agamemnon's gifts, seems to be more relevant. Yet, contrary to what Wyatt 1982, 256 contends, this theme is not developed further; see M.W. Edwards 1991, on *Il.* 9.270–75.

shown by the formula ἀτάσθαλα μηχανάσθαι ('to plan acts of *atasthalīē*') are envisaged as subject to rational planning, it is actually out of the question that *atasthalīē* can stand for the pattern of behaviour which is usually identified as acritic. The case of Hector provides a good example. Actually, the term *atasthalīē* emerges in connection with Hector only once, in his great speech in *Iliad* 22.99–107:

'Ay me, if I go within the gates and walls, Polydamas will be first to bring reproach against me, since he bade me lead the Trojans to the city during this ruinous night, when noble Achilles arose. But I did not listen to him (ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐπακούην), yet surely it had been better far. And now that I have undone the host by my *atasthaliai*, I am ashamed before the men of Troy and women of trailing robes, lest at any time some worse man than I shall say: "Hector by trusting his own might undid the host".'

At the same time, Homer is consistent in presenting *atasthalīē* as the main cause of Hector's downfall even without using the word, and this can be seen from the way in which he describes Hector's debates with Polydamas in Books 12, 13, and 18 of the *Iliad*.³¹ In *Iliad* 12, before the attack against the Achaean camp, Polydamas interprets an omen to the effect that it would be unwise to proceed with the attack. Hector disagrees, abuses Polydamas, boasts that he is under the protection of Zeus (which is true for the time being), and leads the troops. In the last analysis Polydamas is of course right, because this is the very action that will eventually bring on the Trojan disaster; but the attack in question is a success, and no judgement is passed on Hector's behaviour at the moment. In *Iliad* 13 Polydamas interferes again with Hector's leading the campaign. This time he is much more specific: Hector is incapable of being persuaded by advice (ἀμήχανος ... παραρρητοῖσι πειθέσθαι, v. 726); being a superior warrior, he claims to excel all men in counsel as well, but the gods are not in the habit of granting all their gifts to one person. The characteristic features of *atasthalīē* are already present in this rebuke; but this time Hector follows Polydamas' advice to summon the council and to discuss the plan of action, and the theme is dropped, only to emerge again in *Iliad* 18, which provides the background for Hector's self-accusation in his last speech.

What happens in *Iliad* 18 is this. In view of Achilles' return to action, Polydamas suggests that the troops should be taken into the city, but Hector disagrees. When the Trojans take Hector's side, the poet comments as follows (vv. 311–13): 'Foolish ones, for Pallas Athena bereft them of their wit. And they

³¹ *Il.* 12.195–264; 13. 723–57; 18.243–315. For the analysis of these books in the light of Hector's error see Redfield 1975, 143–53; Schofield 1986, 18–22.

gave assert to Hector, though he advised poorly, but none to Polydamas who devised good counsel'.³² The behaviour of the Trojans, whose wits (*phrenes*) have been taken away by Athena, is described in terms of *atē*.³³ Not so, however, in the case of Hector himself, and this is made perfectly clear from the phrase κακὰ μητιόωντι, 'though he advised (lit. 'deliberated') poorly' which characterizes his position in the discussion. Like μηχανάομαι, discussed in Section 1, μητιάω is a purely 'rational' term which can only relate to the deliberate activity of *mētis*.³⁴ That is to say, as against the 'good counsel' of Polydamas Hector forces on the Trojans his own advice, which happens to be bad.³⁵ A bad judgement, however, is nevertheless a judgement, and this explains why the downfall of Hector is ascribed in *Iliad* 22 to *atasthalīē* rather than to *atē* or *akrasia*.³⁶

Nor can *atē*, irrational though it is, be identified with *akrasia*. We saw indeed that, as distinct from *akrasia*, which presupposes one's awareness of the right course of action, no such awareness is implied in the Homeric idea of *atē*. The problem of an acratc man is not that he does not see the right course of action but that he is incapable of following it: 'you seem to speak all this almost after mine own mind', Achilles says to Ajax in *Iliad* 9.645–648, 'but my heart (*kra-diē*) swells with wrath whenever I think of those things, how the son of Atreus humiliated me in front of the Argives, as though I were some migrant with no rights'. Yet, when Homer describes Agamemnon's insulting Achilles in *Iliad* 1, he does not represent him as he represents Achilles in the same episode, namely, as being in inner conflict: Agamemnon simply does not think of the consequences of his behaviour, and this is exactly what *atē* is about.

Thus, *akrasia* differs from both *atasthalīē* and *atē* in that, while *atasthalīē* is purely rational and *atē* purely irrational, *akrasia* participates in both: it is in fact

32 νήπιοι· ἐκ γάρ σφρων φρένας εἴλετο Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.

Ἔκτορι μὲν γὰρ ἐπήνησαν κακὰ μητιόωντι,

Πουλυδάμαντι δ' ἄρ' οὗ τις ὅς ἐσθλὴν φράζετο βουλήν.

33 That putting *atē* into one's heart and taking away one's understanding are events of the same order has been shown by Dodds 1951, 2–4.

34 Note that at *Od.* 3.213 μητιάσθαι is a *varia lectio* of μηχανάσθαι. Note also that the error of Odysseus' companions is described at *Od.* 12.373 by means of the same verb (οἱ δ' ἔταροι μέγα ἔργον ἐμητίσαντο μένοντες), that a similar language is used for describing Clytemnestra's premeditated assassination of Agamemnon at *Od.* 11.429 (ἐμήσατο ἔργον ἀεικέες), and that the verb μητιάω can take βουλή as a direct object, see *Il.* 20.153–54, cf. 7.45.

35 Note that in his reply to Polydamas Hector not only adduces arguments which are meant to counterbalance Polydamas' advice but even envisages the possibility of a single combat with Achilles, see *Il.* 18.284–309 and M.W. Edwards 1991, *ad loc.*

36 Cf. Dawe 1967, 99: 'those who ... believe in an *ate*-stricken Hector will find nothing in Homer's actual language to support them'.

a blend of the rational and the irrational in which the irrational gets the upper hand. We can discern, therefore, three patterns of error in Homer: *atē*, which originates in the irrational, *atasthalīē*, which originates in the rational, and the yielding to one's *thumos*, later termed *akrasia*, which participates in both.³⁷ As far as I can see, the three patterns in question exhaust the whole range of human error in Homer. In the *Iliad*, such major errors as Helen's eloping with Paris, Agamemnon's insulting of Achilles and Patroclus' fatal attack on the walls of Troy are described as due to *atē*. As distinct from this, Hector's refusal to take the troops into the city, eventually leading to military disaster and his own death, is described as due to *atasthalīē*. Finally, Achilles' persisting in his anger which led to the death of Patroclus is seen as a direct result of his inability to control his *thumos*, that is, as what later came to be called *akrasia*. In the *Odyssey*, Helen's eloping with Paris and, accordingly, the Trojan War as a whole are, again, envisaged as a result of *atē*, and the same interpretation is given to Odysseus' sleep on Thrinacia which led to the seven-year delay of his return. On the other hand, Odysseus' entering the Cyclops' cave, the slaughtering of the cattle of Helios by Odysseus' companions, the Suitors' behaviour in the house of Odysseus and Aegisthus' murdering of Agamemnon are envisaged as due to *atasthalīē*. There is no conclusive example of acratia behavior in the *Odyssey*, but Odysseus' taking control over his heart in *Odyssey* 20 (see above) shows that this model was certainly in the poet's mind.³⁸

37 There is reason to suppose that of the three patterns of error *akrasia* is the latest. First, the only Homeric formula in which one's interaction with one's *thumos* is cast, ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν (*Il.* 11.403; 17.90; 18.5; 20.343; 21.53 and 552; 22.98; *Od.* 5.298, 355, 407, 464), could only have been created after the disappearance of the digamma, see Hoekstra 1965, 68–70. Second, as distinct from the expressions involving *atē* and *atasthalīē*, those rendering the idea of restraining one's *thumos* are for the most part individual expressions: in fact, the only formula that can be taken into account in this connection seems to be the awkward [οὐ] ... ἐρητύειτ' ἐν φρεσὶ θυμὸς (*Il.* 9.462, 13.280; on the distinction between formulaic and individual expressions see above, ch. 4). Third, the larger part of these expressions is concentrated in the problematic Book 9 of the *Iliad* (see above, n. 29). Finally, the very fact that one's inability to restrain one's *thumos* has no term of its own seems to indicate that what is being dealt with here is a developing concept.

38 Tiresias' instructions to Odysseus in the Underworld contain what seems to be an interpretation of the Thrinacia episode in the vein of *akrasia*, see *Od.* 11.104–05: ἀλλ' ἔτι μὲν κε καὶ ὧς, κακὰ περ πάσχοντες, ἴκοισθε, / αἶ κ' ἐθέλῃς σὸν θυμὸν ἐρυκακέειν καὶ ἐταίρων ('Yet even so, you and your men may perhaps reach home, though with much misery, if only you be willing to restrain your own and your comrades' *thumos*'). As we have seen, in the rest of the *Odyssey* the same episode is interpreted through the *atasthalīē* of Odysseus' companions and the *atē* of Odysseus himself.

We can see, therefore, that *atastaliē* not only cannot be reduced to the other patterns of error but it represents a pattern which is indispensable for the correct understanding of the course of action in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. This is not to say that this pattern is of equal importance for either Homeric poem. Although both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are, as we saw, well acquainted with the tripartite division of human error, their attitude to the patterns of error discussed above is different. In the *Iliad*, *atē* is the dominating pattern. It serves to account not only for the errors of the protagonists, such as Helen, Agamemnon and Patroclus, but also for those of many a minor personage, and in Books 9 and 19 it is even given a sort of theological foundation. However, as far as the *Odyssey* is concerned, *atastaliē* dominates the scene: the two major misdoings of the poem, of the Suitors and of Odysseus' companions, are consistently accounted for as due to *atastaliē*, and Zeus' handling of the case of Aegisthus in the prologue is, to borrow Dodds' expression, 'programmatic' to the poem. And the programme is carried out not only in respect of the Suitors and Odysseus' companions,³⁹ but also in respect of Odysseus himself, for the adventure on the Cyclops island was entirely his own initiative: accordingly, he is the only one to blame for its disastrous consequences.⁴⁰

3

In view of the above discussion, it can be illuminating to compare the tripartite division of human error as attested in Homer with similar classifications in later Greek sources. The specific classification I have in mind is that introduced by Aristotle in his discussion of *proairesis* in Book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle starts by dividing all human actions into involuntary and voluntary; the first category comprises actions committed under compulsion or in ignorance and the second those committed in full knowledge. One is not held responsible and is not punished for the involuntary actions, and he is held

³⁹ Dodds 1951, 32–33; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 29.

⁴⁰ Cf. Rutherford 1986, 150–51; S. West in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, on *Od.* 1.7. According to Friedrich 1991, 27, this episode fulfils Zeus' words in the prologue (above), in that Odysseus is allegedly punished by Zeus for his *hubris* on the Cyclops island. This is to misunderstand the message of Zeus' theodicy: had Zeus simply meant that mortals are punished by the gods for their misdoings there would have been nothing unusual about it. What Zeus does mean and what is being carried out throughout the poem is the idea that there are errors committed *hyper moron*, that is, not in accordance with the divine design—of these errors, mortals are the only authors.

responsible and is punished for the voluntary ones. The voluntary actions in their turn are divided into two categories: those committed in passion and those committed as a result of calculation. One is held responsible for both kinds of error, because in both cases the person had exact knowledge of what he or she was doing. Voluntary actions committed in a state of passion result from *akrasia*, and those committed as a result of calculation result from *proairesis*. The difference between the two is that whereas the actions that are due to *akrasia* do not issue from preliminary reasoning (τὸ προβεβουλευμένον), those due to *proairesis* are only such as have been performed on the basis of such reasoning.⁴¹

It is not difficult to see that, when put into Homeric terms, Aristotle's involuntary actions committed out of ignorance would be equivalent to those deriving from *atē*, his voluntary actions committed out of passion, i.e. the acratice ones, would be equivalent to man's yielding to his *thumos*, and his voluntary actions committed in full knowledge and after preliminary reasoning would be equivalent to those deriving from *atasthalīē*. Aristotle's term for the source of the latter is *proairesis*, and *proairesis* is defined by him as 'deliberate desire of things in our own power'.⁴² Let us return for a moment to Eurylochus' deliberation which led to the slaughtering of the cattle of Helios. Although Eurylochus hopes that he will manage to avoid the god's anger by building him a temple on his return to Ithaca, he is at the same time fully aware that he may well be punished by death for the sacrilege he is about to commit. His reasoning is quite simple: of the two kinds of death threatening him he prefers the quick death by drowning to the slow death by starvation. His analysis of the situation is as rational as it can possibly be; yet his choice between the two options (and we must not forget that Odysseus made the opposite choice under the same circumstances) is solely rooted in his wish: 'I wish (βούλομ') rather with one gulp at the wave to cast my life away than be slowly straitened to death in a desert isle' (*Od.* 12.350–51, quoted in full above, pp. 239–40). That is to say, whether or not we take *proairesis* as understood by Aristotle as commensurable with the modern concept of will,⁴³ there can be no doubt that Homer's *atasthalīē*, which has been shown to correspond to the negative aspect of Aristotle's *proairesis* (which, of course, comprises both erroneous and right decisions),⁴⁴ should be approached along the same lines. Considering

⁴¹ *Eth.Nic.* 1110a1–1112a17; cf. *Rhet.* 1373b25–38; 1374b1–9.

⁴² *Eth.Nic.* 1113a11 βουλευτική ὁρεξις τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

⁴³ According to Burnet 1900, 109, 'this [i.e. will] is after all the best rendering of the word'; according to Dihle 1982, 57, 'one other detail in Aristotle's moral and psychological doctrines could have led to the concept of will as isolated from both instinct and reason'.

⁴⁴ The most typical Homeric example of the latter is the consideration of possible alternatives leading to a reasoned decision as, for example, in Odysseus' soliloquies in *Od.* 5.408–23 and

that Aristotle's division of error closely follows forensic practice of the Athenian courts,⁴⁵ it seems reasonable to conclude that the principles on which one was recognized as either responsible or not for his actions did not differ greatly in Homer's times from those of Aristotle.

This is not necessarily to say that the classification of human actions into voluntary and involuntary would be the same in Homer and Aristotle. The way in which both treat errors caused by the excessive consumption of wine provides a good example. In Homer, such errors are treated as deriving from *atē* and thus as those for which the agent is not held responsible; in Aristotle, the same errors are treated as resulting from *akrasia* and, as with other acratc acts, as those for which the agent is held responsible.⁴⁶ Moreover, to judge from Aristotle's examples of acts due to the agent's ignorance and therefore classified as involuntary, that is to say, acts which Homer would ascribe to *atē*, only such errors as unintentional homicide would continue to figure on Aristotle's list.⁴⁷ That is to say, although the tripartite division of human error remained the same, its content underwent some significant modifications after Homer.

Note that the tripartite division of human error is discussed twice in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: in the discussion of *proairesis* in Book 3 this division is taken in the perspective of individual responsibility, and in the discussion of justice in Book 5 it is taken in the juridical and moral perspective. The latter yields *atuchēma*, misadventure, and *hamartēma*, mistake, for the terms of involuntary error; *adikēma*, an act of injustice, for an error committed in a state of passion and without preliminary reasoning (although the act is unjust, the agent is not a vicious man); finally, he who commits a crime as a result of *proairesis* (ἐκ προαίρεσεως), is defined as an unjust and vicious man (ἄδικος καὶ μοχθηρός).⁴⁸ Comparison of this classification with that found in Homer shows that the distinctive feature of the Homeric terms for error is their morally neutral character. This is true of *atē*,⁴⁹ which embraces morally condemnable acts, such as that of Helen and Paris, alongside morally neutral ones, such as Odysseus' falling asleep

465–73, adduced in Dihle 1982, 191 n. 33. Dihle comments on them as follows: 'In both cases, Homer describes in great detail what goes on in the mind of Odysseus before he makes the choice of the means and ends of the action required in the given situation-without using, of course, the word προαίρεσις'.

45 See Burnet 1900, 108–109; Dover 1974, 146–54; Dihle 1982, 185 n. 85.

46 *Od.* 11.61; 21.295–98; *Eth.Nic.* 1113b30–33.

47 *Eth.Nic.* 1111a8–21.

48 *Eth.Nic.* 1135b11–1136a9.

49 See Dodds 1951, 5–6; Adkins 1982, 324–26 and 1960, 50–51.

on Thrinacia; and this is also true of *atasthalīē*, which makes no distinction between the mistakes of Hector and Odysseus and the crimes of Aegisthus and the Suitors.⁵⁰ When Homer wishes to emphasize the morally condemnable character of a given act, he does so by applying to it terms of ethical evaluation (see above, n. 12).

Let us suppose now that all human actions in Homer, and not only those to which terms of ethical evaluation are actually applied, are approached in the perspective of such evaluation. Clearly, this would sharply diminish the cases of *atē*, for neither an Agamemnon nor a Helen would now be able to plead not guilty on the grounds of ignorance. In other words, many involuntary errors would now be classed as voluntary ones, and only those subsumed under the category of accidents would continue to retain their former status. As the treatment of errors of this sort as misadventures would be more appropriate, this would account for the decline of *atē* in its traditional sense.⁵¹ Furthermore, approaching all human actions in the perspective of ethical evaluation would also radically change the traditional understanding of the voluntary error: when taken in this perspective, many voluntary errors would become voluntary crimes. This would account for the decline of *atasthalīē* and its replacement by such morally coloured terms as *hubris* and *adikia*.⁵² It is at the same time clear that not any error, voluntary though it may be, deserves such harsh treatment, so that it can be expected that the change in the understanding of both the voluntary and involuntary error would contribute to enlargement of the intermediate sphere of *akrasia*, a pattern of error according to which the agent knows what is right and good but his or her passions prevent the agent from following the right course of action (Euripides' *Phaedra* immediately comes to mind here). After Homer, this pattern not only enormously increases in popularity, but also is provided at last with a term of its own.

⁵⁰ Heracles of *H.15* should also be added to the list of heroes whose *atasthalīē* cannot be easily measured by moral or religious standards, see πολλά μὲν αὐτὸς ἔρεξεν ἀτάσθαλα, πολλὰ δ' ἀνέτλη ('he himself committed many acts of *atasthalīē*, and endured many) at v. 6 (v.l. ἔξοχα ἔργα). Cf. also ἀτάσθαλον Ἀπόλλωνα at *H.Ap.* 67.

⁵¹ Note at the same time that the terms in which Sophocles treats Oedipus' involuntary error in the lyrics of *Oedipus at Colonus* do not differ essentially from those of Homer, see esp. 525–26 κακὰ μ' εὐνᾷ πόλις οὐδὲν ἴδριν / γάμων ἐνέδησεν ἄτα. See further Finkelberg 1997.

⁵² After emerging on a number of occasions in early Greek poetry and prose (see above, n. 12), *atasthalīē* disappears so completely that it is even quoted in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as an example of a 'strange' word, see *Rhet.* 1406a9. It is not until the second century CE that the word emerges again, see Luc. *Astr.* 20, cf. *Cont.* 3; Arr. *An.* 7.14.5, cf. 627.4; *Ind.* 13.3.

We saw above that although the principles according to which Homer and Aristotle classify human errors are the same, their assessment of the same acts is often different. We can see now that this difference was due to the introduction of terms designating various forms of error which are also terms of ethical evaluation.⁵³ At the same time, Aristotle's discussion of justice clearly shows that these terms were superimposed on the existing patterns of error rather than supplanted them. In other words, although the shift in the terminology of error may well be indicative of significant developments in the realm of ethics, it does not suggest a different kind of psychology for the Greeks of the classical age. The essential distinction between the involuntary action committed in ignorance and the voluntary action committed out of knowledge remains the same.⁵⁴

53 This is not to say that classical Greek did not possess a morally neutral term for error: *hamartia* with its cognates was just such a term. See Dover 1974, 152: 'it was possible to distinguish between error (*hamartiā*, *hamartēma*, verb *hamartanein* or *exhamartanein*) on the one hand and crime, wrong-doing (*adikiā*, *adikēma*, verb *adikein*), sin or impiety (*asebeiā*, *asebēma*, verb *asebein*) on the other'. At the same time, *hamartia* was used as an inclusive term for human error both in the sense that 'not all errors are crimes or sins, but any crime or sin can be called "error" in Greek (ibid.) and in the sense that it is 'something which can be either entirely the responsibility of the man who makes it, or can be something induced, normally by the gods', Dawe 1967, 94.

54 This paper originated in a lecture given in April 1990 at a seminar on the image of man in religions of the ancient world organized by the Department of Comparative Religion of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; much of its substance was included in a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies held by Tel Aviv University in June 1993, and it was read in full in February 1994 at the Institut für Griechische und Lateinische Philologie of the Freie Universität Berlin. My thanks are due to all those who contributed to the discussions; I would also like to thank Alan Sommerstein for his helpful suggestions.

22 *Timē* and *Aretē* in Homer

Much effort has been invested by scholars in defining the specific character of the Homeric values as against those that obtained at later periods of Greek history. The distinction between the 'shame-culture' and the 'guilt-culture' introduced by E.R. Dodds, and that between the 'competitive' and the 'cooperative' values advocated by A.W.H. Adkins, are among the more influential ones.¹ Although Adkins' taxonomy encountered some acute criticism, notably from A.A. Long,² it has become generally adopted both in scholarly literature and in general philosophical discussions of Greek ethics.³ Objections to Adkins' approach have mainly concentrated on demonstrating that his denial of cooperative values to Homer is untenable on general grounds and is not supported by Homeric evidence.⁴

Characteristically, Adkins' thesis concerning the centrality to Homer's ethics of the so-called 'competitive values' has never received similar attention, probably owing to the fact that this is the point at which his picture of the Homeric society concurs with the influential reconstructions by W. Jaeger and M.I. Finley.⁵ The present study of *timē* and *aretē*, generally held to be the two competitive values central to the Homeric poems, purports to address this issue.

1

Let us begin with Adkins' definition of the competitive values. 'In any society there are activities in which success is of paramount importance; in these, commendation or the reverse is reserved for those who in fact succeed or fail'.⁶ As far as I can see, this definition does not take into account some hallmark characteristics of the competitive values as understood by the Greeks themselves. Nowhere do these characteristics come to light more clearly than in the most competitive of Greek institutions, the athletic contest. First of all, the basic assumption that makes the competition possible is that it is a mutual emulation of equals that

1 Dodds 1951, 28–63; Adkins 1960, 30–85.

2 Long 1970.

3 See, e.g., Macintyre 1984, 133: 'A.W.H. Adkins has usefully contrasted the co-operative and the competitive virtues. The competitive he sees as Homeric in their ancestry; the co-operative represent the social world of the Athenian democracy'.

4 See Long 1970; Lloyd-Jones 1983, 12–20; Schofield 1986; Williams 1993, 81–84, 100–102; Cairns 1993, 50–146; Zanker 1994, 1–45.

5 Jaeger 1947, 3–14; Finley 1978, 118–21. Cf. Adkins 1971, 1–2.

6 Adkins 1960, 6.

alone, in the Greeks' view, can bring one to the threshold of the greatest perfection attainable to mortals, 'the peak of *aretē*' (ἄκρον ἀρετῆς) in the language of the poets.⁷ Nobody expresses this point better than Plutarch in his discussion of the Sacred Band of Boeotia:

For as horses run brisker in a chariot than singly, not that their joint force divides the air with greater ease, but because being matched one against the other emulation kindles and inflames their courage; thus he [Pelopidas] thought brave men, provoking one another to noble actions, would prove most serviceable in a common cause, and most resolute.⁸

This is why Plato maintained that mutual emulation as evinced in what he saw as the typically Greek pursuits of homoerotic friendship, philosophy, and gymnastics not only leads one to the perfection of virtue but is also dangerous in the eyes of tyrants.⁹ Only social equals can take part in this kind of competitive interaction and consequently they are also the only ones entitled to the possession of *aretē*. Obviously, this would exclude the slave from laying claims to *aretē*, but the same would also hold true of the single ruler, who by definition cannot be a party in a competitive situation. Accordingly, the lack of social equality would make *aretē*, as well as any other competitive value, totally irrelevant.¹⁰

Furthermore, important as was victory in competition, participation as such was held as no less important. Pindar dedicated his *Nemean* 11 to Aristagoras of Tenedos, who was prevented by his parents from participating in the Olympian and Pythian contests. After expressing his confidence that Aristagoras would have won the first prize had he become a participant, Pindar wrote:

Of mortals one is expelled from the ranks of the good (*agathoi*) by the boasts of empty mind; the other, too distrustful of his own strength, misses the fine things he deserves because his spirit, devoid of daring, draws him back by the hand.¹¹

7 Cf., e.g., Hes. *Op.* 291; Tyrt. 12.43 W; Pind. *Nem.* 6.23.

8 *Pelop.* 19.4. Transl. J. Dryden, rev. A.H. Clough, with slight changes.

9 *Symp.* 182bc. Cf. Ar. *Pol.* 5.11 1313a39–b6, 1314a5–8.

10 This point was admirably expressed by Peter Brown in his discussion of *philotimia* at the age of the Antonines, see Brown 1978, 31: 'On the one hand, it committed the members of the upper class to a blatant competitiveness on all levels of social life... On the other hand, the competitiveness of *philotimia* still assumed and needed, as it had done for centuries, an audience of significant others who were potential competitors. Without these the exercise of *philotimia* would have been deprived of a large part of its meaning'.

11 *Nem.* 11.29–32; my translation. See also *Nem.* 3.70–71 ἐν δὲ πείρᾳ τέλος διαφαίνεται ὧν τις ἐξοχώτερος γέννηται. Cf. *Isthm.* 1.68–70; *Parth* 1.6–10.

The presence of the word *agathoi*, the adjective which corresponds to the noun *aretē*, indicates that what is at issue here is the basic qualification required in order that one may be recognized as a possessor of this value. That is to say, not just the winning, as in Adkins' formulation, but the very fact of participating in the competition would be sufficient to either qualify or disqualify a person as belonging to the category of the possessors of *aretē*. We shall return to this issue in discussing Achilles' abstention from fighting in the *Iliad*; for the present, it will be sufficient to emphasize that this is essentially the same attitude as that expressed in Aristotle's comparison of human life with the experience of the games:

And as in the Olympian Games it is not the most beautiful and the strongest that are crowned but those who compete (for it is some of these that are victorious), so those who act win, and rightly win, the noble and good things in life.¹²

Mutual emulation and participation as such were thus the two factors essential to the standard Greek view of the competitive values. To what degree can these two factors be regarded as relevant to the Homeric epics?

The main conflict of the *Iliad* is that of honour. It was because of the considerations of honour that Agamemnon took Briseis from Achilles and it was the considerations of honour again that caused Achilles to retire from participation in the Trojan campaign from the moment that his prize of honour, *geras*, had been taken from him. The value of honour is thus interwoven into the very core of the *Iliad* plot. As it is generally assumed that honour is a competitive value, it is not surprising that it is central to the approach treating Homer's ethics as strictly competitive. Thus, Finley wrote in *The World of Odysseus*:

It is in the nature of honour that it must be exclusive, or at least hierarchic. When everyone attains equal honour, then there is no honour for anyone. Of necessity, therefore, the world of Odysseus was fiercely competitive, as each hero strove to outdo the others.¹³

This is not, however, what the distribution of honour in Homer shows us.

The Greek word conventionally rendered by the English 'honour' is *timē*. This is not to say that 'honour' and *timē* are strictly equivalent. As Jasper Griffin has pointed out, it is often overlooked that Homer sees honour as inseparable from

¹² *Eth.Nic.* 1.8 1099a3–7, transl. D. Ross. These words were paraphrased by Pierre de Coubertin at the Berlin Olympics as follows: 'The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. Just as in life, the aim is not to conquer, but to struggle well'. See N. Spivey, 'Faster, Higher, Stronger?' (without acknowledging the Greek source), *TLS* July 19, 1996.

¹³ Finley 1978, 118.

such outward manifestations of it as honourable cuts of meat, gifts, and possessions.¹⁴ And indeed, the use of the word in the *Iliad* shows that in the majority of the contexts in which it appears the appropriate translation of the Greek *timē* would be ‘status’ and/or ‘prestige’ rather than the unqualified ‘honour’; judging by Aristotle’s argument of the superiority of virtue (*aretē*) over honour (*timē*) because the latter ‘is thought to depend on those who bestow honour rather than on him who receives it’, the same was also true of the classical Greek concept of *timē*.¹⁵ Characteristically, the only Homeric formula in which the word *timē* occurs is ἔμμορε τιμῆς, ‘he/she has been allotted a *timē*’, or ‘has been given his/her portion of *timē*’. The formula and its modifications appear in the Homeric corpus, in Hesiod, and in elegy; its dispersion and productivity show that the idea of the allotment of *timē* rather than gaining it in fair competition was deeply rooted in Greek poetic tradition.¹⁶ This seems to indicate that *timē* should be regarded not as a competitive but rather as what can be called a ‘distributive’ value.

‘I have sacked twelve of men’s cities from my ships’, Achilles says bitterly in Book 9 of the *Iliad*,

‘and I claim eleven more by land across the fertile Troad. From all of these I took many fine treasures, and every time I brought them all and gave to Agamemnon son of Atreus: and every time, back there by the fast ships he had never left, he would take them in, share out a few, and keep the most for himself’.¹⁷

These words repeat in a more elaborate form a similar complaint made by Achilles in his quarrel with Agamemnon in Book 1, and what Thersites says in Book 2 is much to the same effect.¹⁸ At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that it was above all Achilles’ being deprived of his share of the booty rather than a general social discontent that stirred his passionate invective against the existing order of things in *Iliad* 9:¹⁹ as we shall see presently, his own distribution of prizes in the athletic contests over which he presided was based on the same principles as Agamemnon’s distribution of booty. Note also that on other occasions it is ‘the

¹⁴ Griffin 1980, 14–15.

¹⁵ *Eth.Nic.* 1.5 1095b23–24.

¹⁶ ἔμμορε τιμῆς *Il.* 1.278, 15.189; *Od.* 5.335, 11.338; *H.Ven.* 37; *Hes. Th.* 414, 426; cf. μέγρο τιμῆς *Il.* 9.616; τιμῆς ἔμμοροι *Od.* 8.480; ἔμμορέ τοι τιμῆς *Hes. Op.* 347; τιμῆς ἔμμορεν *Theog.* 234 W. Note that this is the only context in which the perfect ἔμμορε appears in Homer.

¹⁷ *Il.* 9.328–33. Transl. M. Hammond, slightly adapted.

¹⁸ *Il.* 1.165–68; 2.225–34.

¹⁹ That it would be wrong to take the Achilles of this speech as a social ‘outsider’ who rejects the ethical values of his society has recently been argued in Gill 1996, 124–54.

Achaean's' in general rather than Agamemnon alone who are represented as responsible for the distribution of the booty;²⁰ this, however, does not alter the fact that this distribution was not in proportion to the achievements of the recipients.

Nowhere is this disproportionality shown with greater lucidity than in the description of what is supposed to be the most competitive of events, the athletic contests held by Achilles at Patroclus' tomb in Book 23 of the *Iliad*. In analyzing the chariot race in which the man who came last receives the first prize because he is 'the best', *aristos*, and he who came third receives the second prize on exactly the same grounds, Adkins, proceeding from the assumption of the superiority of the competitive values in Homer, naturally comes to the conclusion that what is depicted here is 'a hopeless tangle of values': 'Unless the allotment of prizes bears some relation to the result of the race, there is no point in running at all, since the prizes could be distributed before the race starts'.²¹ Characteristically, Adkins does not adduce the episode that concludes the competitions, namely, the throwing of the spear in which Agamemnon receives the first prize without even participating in the contest. This is the Homeric *timē* at its clearest:

Then the son of Peleus brought a long-shadowed spear and put it down in the gathering, and a cauldron untouched by the fire, the worth of an ox, with a pattern of flowers on it: and the spear-throwers rose for the contest. Up stood the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, and Meriones rose too, Idomeneus' brave lieutenant. The swift-footed godlike Achilles said to them: 'Son of Atreus, we know how superior you are to all others, and how much you are the best (*aristos*) in strength for the spear-throw. So you take this prize with you on your way to the hollow ships, and let us give the spear to the hero Meriones, if that might be the wish of your own heart—that is what I suggest'. So he spoke, and Agamemnon, lord of men, did not fail to agree. The hero gave the bronze spear to Meriones, and handed his beautiful prize to his [Agamemnon's] herald Talthylus.²²

A society in which a contest can be won without even a slight effort on the part of the winner can hardly be considered an embodiment of competitive values.

Consider also the following. Patroclus, although he is Achilles' closest friend, is not held equal to Achilles; nor is Aegisthus to Agamemnon, who, after all, is his close relative; Menelaus is prevented by Agamemnon from trying his strength against Hector on the a priori ground that he is not as good as Achilles or Ajax or Diomedes; nevertheless, he is 'better' than Antilochus and therefore receives the second prize in the chariot race whereas Antilochus, who came before him, ought to be content with the third; we saw that Agamemnon in his turn receives the first

²⁰ See Hainsworth 1993, 105–106, on *Il.* 9.333.

²¹ Adkins 1960, 56.

²² *Il.* 23.884–97.

prize without even taking part in the contest; finally Ajax, in spite of his outstanding military prowess and his exemplary performance on the battlefield, is permanently allotted only the second place in the pre-established hierarchy of the Achaean warriors whereas Achilles remains the ‘best of the Achaeans’ without even taking the trouble to prove his worth in the battles of the *Iliad*.²³ As a result, the only genuinely competitive situation in which the Homeric warrior finds himself involved is that of the single combat: here indeed he must be cautious in order not to dishonour himself by fighting against his social inferior.²⁴

It is little wonder, then, that it is in confrontation with the enemy rather than in competition against his equals and peers that the Homeric warrior earns his glory (*kleos*). In a society such as this, glory indeed seems to be the only levelling factor. Yet, as Achilles’ case amply demonstrates, important as it is for the preservation of one’s name in posterity, glory nevertheless does not act as a substitute for status. Consider the following two verses in Achilles’ speech in *Iliad* 9, showing the same connection between *timē*, ‘honour’, and *moira*, ‘portion, share’ as in the formula ἔμμορε τιμῆς discussed above: ‘Stay at home or fight your hardest—your share will be the same. Coward and hero are given equal honour’.²⁵ Bryan Hainsworth comments on the second line:

This verse implies that for Achilles there is an ideal equation between κλέος/κῦδος and τιμή. In the real world this equation is a pretence, because distinctions in rank are not established by the achievement of fame, and the possession of status *ipso facto* confers κῦδος, cf. 1.279. In a world where status was inherited along with the sceptre of kingship (2.100–8), it was hard even for an ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν to be upwardly mobile.²⁶

‘After all’, Finley wrote of Homeric society, ‘the basic values of the society were given, predetermined, and so were a man’s place in the society and the privileges and duties that followed from his status’.²⁷ Indeed, it was above all the pressures

²³ Patroclus *Il.* 16.709; Aegisthus *Od.* 3.250; Menelaus *Il.* 7.103–19; 23.578, 588, 605; Agamemnon *Il.* 23.891–92; Ajax *Il.* 2.768–69. As the range of the application of the formula ἀρετῇ δ’ ἦν (or: ἔσαν) ἔξοχος αὐτῶν (or: ἔξοχ’ ἄριστοι) shows, full equality was reserved only for such homogeneous groups as the sons of the same father or the suitors of Penelope; see *Il.* 14.118; *Od.* 4.629, 21.187, 22.244.

²⁴ See esp. *Il.* 6.119–211 (Glaucus and Diomedes), 20.176–258 (Achilles and Aeneas).

²⁵ *Il.* 9.318–19 ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζει· ἐν δὲ ἱῇ τιμῇ ἡμὲν κακὸς ἡδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός.

²⁶ Hainsworth 1993, 104. Characteristically, Aristotle in *Pol.* 2.7 1267a1–2 quotes Achilles’ ‘Coward and hero are given equal honour’ in support of his argument that the distribution of honour must be proportionate to one’s contribution to the well-being of the polis. The same sentiment is expressed in Eur. *Hec.* 306–308.

²⁷ Finley 1978, 115.

of status, aptly defined by Griffin as *noblesse oblige*, rather than the spirit of competition that caused Homeric warriors to risk their lives on the battlefield. 'Glau-cus', Sarpedon says in *Iliad* 12,

'why is it that we two are held in the highest honour in Lycia, with pride of place, the best of the meat, the wine-cup always full, and all look on us like gods, and we have for our own use a great cut of the finest land by the banks of the Xanthus, rich in vineyard and wheat-bearing plough land? That is why we should now be taking our stand at the front of the Lycian lines and facing the sear of battle, so that among the heavy-armoured Lycians people will say: "These are no worthless men who rule over us in Lycia, these kings we have who eat our fat sheep and drink the choice of our honey-sweet wine. No, they have strength too and courage, since they fight at the front of the Lycian lines"'.²⁸

In a similar vein, Odysseus, remaining alone against the enemy, says 'I know that it is only unworthy ones (*kakoi*) who keep clear of fighting'.²⁹ Although it is true that the substantive adjective *kakoi* does not always imply social inferiors,³⁰ this does not alter the fact that the stimulus behind the Homeric warriors' behaviour is first of all the drive to meet the expectations that flow from their status: that those who enjoy high social status may nevertheless prove 'unworthy ones' (Penelope's suitors immediately come to mind in this connection) only shows that there will always be some who fail to meet these expectations rather than alters the character of the expectations themselves.³¹

As was shown by Long, side by side with risking one's life in war, these expectations also embraced assistance to and protection of those with whom the person was tied by the mutual obligations of military alliance, guest-friendship,

28 *Il.* 12.310–21; cf. Griffin 1980, 14. While I agree with Gill 1996, 131–36 that comparison of Sarpedon's speech to Achilles' great speech in *Iliad* 9 does not prove Achilles a 'social outsider', I cannot share his marginalizing of Sarpedon's speech into a private statement which has very little to do with the so-called 'heroic code'. As Gill himself points out, Achilles' deviatory behaviour and social criticism as expressed in *Iliad* 9 directly result from the breach in the normative behaviour on the part of Agamemnon, his social equal, who 'has undermined the relationship of generalized reciprocity which should exist between chieftains' (p. 135, cf. also p. 149). However, the reciprocity meant in Sarpedon's speech is the one between the chieftains and their vassals, a sort of *contrat social* intended to regulate the division of functions between the nobles and the commoners, and therefore it can hardly be relevant to the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, both of whom belong to the class of the nobles. Cf. Cairns 1993, 95: 'while one hero may have more *timē* than another, in dealing with his fellow heroes he is never dealing with one who has a negligible claim to *timē* of his own'.

29 *Il.* 11.408.

30 See Gill 1996, 69–74.

31 Cf. Cairns 1993, 101: 'It is certainly not part of the structure of Homeric values that any and every action of an *agathos* is legitimized by his *aretē*'.

or vassal relations.³² These are the cooperative values that complete the distributive value of *timē*. Failure to meet expectations arising from either kind of value would evoke the feeling of shame (*aidōs*), the same feeling that caused Hector on two memorable occasions to repeat the phrase ‘I feel shame before the men of Troy and the women of Troy with their trailing dresses’: on the first occasion, the words explain why he should return to the battlefield instead of staying in Troy with his family; on the second, they explain why, after the army he commanded was destroyed, he should meet almost certain death in single combat with Achilles instead of returning to Troy.³³ In both cases Hector behaves in accordance with the obligations imposed on him by his status;³⁴ neither of them involves a competitive situation. It seems, then, that as far as we have no better term for designating a society the central value of which is that of honour,³⁵ Dodds’ ‘shame-culture’ would be a far more appropriate characterization of Homeric society than Adkins’ ‘competitive values’.

Where does *aretē* enter this picture? If, as is generally agreed, it is the famous Homeric dictum ‘always to be the best and excel over others’ that more than anything else epitomizes the idea of *aretē*, then *aretē* surely is a competitive value.³⁶ Indeed, it goes without saying that in order ‘to be the best’ and ‘to excel over others’ both participation in a competitive situation and the presence of ‘others’ whom one is allowed to surpass are indispensable: this is after all what the competitive values are about. Yet, as we saw, what actually goes on in the *Iliad* can hardly support this dictum.

As is the case with many other analogous Greek words, the semantic development of the word *aretē* proceeded from the particular to the general. The entry for ἀρετή in Ebeling’s *Lexicon Homericum* offers the following range: (1) *praestantia, principatus*, (2) *fortitudo*, (3) *primae*, (4) *successus, salus, res secundae*, (5) *virtus, morum probitas*.

Ebeling’s only example of the last is the *Odyssey* line ‘Far-seeing Zeus takes away the half of a man’s *aretē*, when the day of slavery comes upon him’.³⁷ As we

³² Long 1970, 123–26. See also Zanker 1994, 1–45.

³³ *Il.* 6.442, 22.105 αἰδέομαι Τρῳᾶς καὶ Τρωάδας ἔλκεσιπέλους.

³⁴ Cf. Cairns 1993, 81: ‘Hector’s education will have taught him how society expects him to behave, and so contributes to the formation of his social role; in as much as his *thumos* and his *aidōs* combine in leading him to pursue this role, he has obviously made the values under which he acts his own, made the expectations of society equivalent to his own expectations of himself’.

³⁵ The subject is discussed in Cairns 1993, 43–44, 139–40.

³⁶ *Il.* 6.208, 11.784 αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων. Cf. Jaeger 1947, 7.

³⁷ *Od.* 17.322–33, ἥμισυ γάρ τ’ ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνυται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς / ἀνέρος, εὖτ’ ἂν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἦμαρ ἔλησιν.

shall see later, this is probably too restrictive a classification. However, it does not alter the essential fact that *aretē* in the sense of ‘virtue’ is extremely rare in Homer. The evidence of the Homeric formulae points in the same direction. Of the two principal formulae for *aretē* one means ‘all manner of *aretē*’ and is usually followed by the enumeration of various qualities such as swiftness of foot, military prowess, intelligence, etc.,³⁸ and the other is an enumeration of these very qualities preceded by the word *aretē*.³⁹ The *aretē* of a horse consists in its swiftness of foot, that of soil in its fertility, that of a woman in her being a good housewife, that of a slave in his or her loyalty to the master, that of a warrior in his bravery, and so on.

One can see that what unites all the examples adduced is the sense of fitness as regards the specific function that a person, an animal, or even an object are purported to fulfil at a given moment. By the same token, from the rise of the Greek polis in the eighth century BCE the specific function of the free-born male was his fitness in fulfilling his function as a citizen of the city-state. This is how man in general, for whom the Greek man served as a model, came to be understood, to borrow F.E. Adcock’s apt translation of Aristotle’s famous definition, as a ‘city-state animal’, ζῷον πολιτικόν, and his fitness for this function as human virtue par excellence.⁴⁰ Not so in Homer. In the majority of the Homeric contexts in which the word *aretē* is given a general sense, it functions as a characteristic which is as innate to a person as his or her physical properties, such as strength or beauty. This seems to indicate that, in conformity with the general Homeric system of values and contrary to the later Greek view, *aretē* as such is envisaged in the Homeric poems as predetermined by birth and wealth rather than as expected to be proved in fair competition; accordingly, the translation ‘breeding’ would fit the majority of such contexts.⁴¹

Thus, contrary to the system of values established with the rise of the polis, according to which the distribution of honour must follow one’s personal achievement as expressed by the word *aretē*, the distribution of honour in Homer followed a person’s social status, which was determined by superiority in birth

38 παντοίας ἀρετάς *Il.* 15.642; παντοίην ἀρετὴν *Od.* 18.204; παντοίης ἀρετῇσι *Od.* 5.725, 815; παντοίης ἀρετῆς *Il.* 22.268; cf. ἀρετὴν ... παντοίην *Od.* 13.45.

39 ἀρετὴν εἶδος τε δέμας τε *Od.* 18.251, 19.124; ἀρετῇ βουλῇ τε νόῳ τε *Od.* 12.211; ἀρετὴ τιμὴ τε βίῃ τε *Il.* 9.498; cf. ἀρετῇ τε βίῃ τε *Il.* 23.578.

40 *Pol.* 1.1.9 1253a; Adcock 1957, 2. See further Finkelberg 2002.

41 As Long 1970, 126–28 has shown, the prevailing function of the corresponding adjective *agathos* is to denote high social status rather than moral excellence. On the Homeric *aretē* as encompassing birth and wealth and therefore never being affected by anyone’s disapproval, see Cairns 1993, 101.

and wealth. It follows from this that placing the competitive values in the centre of Homer's system of values is an anachronism due to projecting the values of the city-state on the Homeric poems. The values central to Homer's system are the distributive value of *timē* and such cooperative values as flow from it.

2

At the same time, it would be wrong to say that the poet of the *Iliad* unambiguously sides with the considerations of personal honour and prestige which move his heroes and the very plot of his poem. Hector sacrifices not only his own life on the altar of honour but also the safety of his family and of the entire city whose principal defender he was: had he listened to the advice of Andromache and Polydamas and continued to lead the campaign from within the city of Troy, he, as he recognizes in the last moments of his life, would have saved himself and his army and thus would have brought much more good to his family and city. Again, it is because of his personal prestige that Agamemnon insults Achilles and thus eventually brings about the heaviest defeat of his army in the war's history; note, however, that he eventually not only recognizes his mistake but also goes so far as to offer his apologies and to pay a vast compensation to the offended, for the sake of the common cause. Similarly, considerations of prestige rendered Achilles indifferent to the sufferings of his comrades and, as is explicitly stated at the very beginning of the *Iliad*, caused the loss of many Achaean lives; only the death of Patroclus made him analyse his past behaviour and realize at last that his cherishing of his wounded honour has brought him too far. It is the case of Achilles that is of especial interest to us here.

Although in Book I of the *Iliad* Zeus solemnly promises Thetis that the Achaeans will suffer loss and defeat as long as Achilles has not received proper compensation for the insult he has suffered at the hands of Agamemnon, nothing decisive happens on the battlefield in the books that follow. At the beginning, it is, rather surprisingly, the Trojans who are heavily pressed (Books 5–6), then indeed the Achaeans (Books 8–9), but it is not until *Iliad* 11 that it can be said with certainty that Zeus' promise is being fulfilled. In the course of this book, the most prominent leaders of the Achaeans—Agamemnon, Diomedes, Odysseus—are wounded one after the other and compelled to leave the battlefield. Hector and the Trojans approach the Achaean ships, and the situation of the Achaeans begins to look desperate. Achilles, who watches the battle from the stern of his ship, notices that Nestor in his chariot carries a wounded warrior back to the Achaean camp, and he sends Patroclus to Nestor's hut to inquire about the man's identity. Homer, who usually does not conceal the unfolding of the plot from his audience,

makes it clear that this is a crucial moment: ‘Patroclus heard him inside the hut, and came out looking like Ares: and this was to be the beginning of his doom’.⁴² Nestor’s lengthy reminiscences and importuning, to which Patroclus is compelled to listen, culminate in practical advice: if Achilles himself is not prepared to fight, he can at least assist his fellow Achaeans by sending to the battlefield Patroclus clad in his armour.

The very length of Nestor’s address to Patroclus indicates the importance of the episode in which it appears: Patroclus’ intervention in the course of events, in that it will eventually lead to Achilles’ return to the battlefield, is the turning point in the plot of the *Iliad*.⁴³ After delivering a story about the glorious part he played as a young man in a local conflict between his native Pylos and its Epean neighbours, Nestor turns to comparing his own behaviour with that of Achilles:

‘That is the man I was, if ever I was, among my fellow-men. But Achilles will be the only one to profit from his *aretē* (οἷος τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπονήσεται). Indeed I think it will be long weeping on his part afterwards, when the army have perished’.⁴⁴

The standard translation of the *aretē* of this passage is ‘prowess’, ‘valour’, or ‘courage’. It is true, of course, that when *aretē* is used in the contexts where risking one’s life is involved, its sense often converges on that of ‘courage’. At the same time, Homer does not hesitate to use *tharsos*, *alkē*, and other words for courage proper whenever he sees fit. As K.J. Dover remarked while attempting to establish a relevant distinction between *aretē* and *andreia*, the word for courage in the classical Greek,

courage to fight to the death when cornered is indeed a virtue, and few Greeks would have predicated *aretē* of a man who lacked it; but the will to take a larger view and risk life in fighting for others, or for a whole of which one feels one’s own community to be a part, goes beyond simple *andreia*.⁴⁵

It is not difficult to see that it is exactly such ‘will to take a larger view’ rather than merely courageous behaviour that is at issue in Nestor’s rebuke of Achilles in *Iliad* 11. The subsequent unfolding of the plot of the *Iliad* points in the same direction.

The direct continuation of the scene between Nestor and Patroclus at the end of Book 11 is the beginning of Book 16, when Patroclus, weeping, returns to Achilles and accuses him of the military disaster of the Achaeans:

⁴² *Il.* 11.604 κακοῦ δ’ ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή.

⁴³ See Austin 1966, 306; M.W Edwards 1987b, 48.

⁴⁴ *Il.* 11.762–64.

⁴⁵ Dover 1974, 166.

‘But you, Achilles, are impossible to deal with. May I never be taken by an anger like yours, the anger you are feeding, terrible as you are! What will any other man, even yet to be born, profit from you, if you do not save the Argives from shameful destruction (τί σευ ἄλλος ὀνήσεται ὀπίγονός περ / αἶ κε μὴ Ἀργείοισιν ἀεικέα λογὸν ἀμύνῃς);’⁴⁶

The phrase ‘what will any other man, even yet to be born, profit from you’ is formed exactly as Nestor’s words ‘Achilles will be the only one to profit from his *aretē*’, the verb (ἀπ)ονίναμαι with the genitive, meaning ‘to have advantage of’, ‘to enjoy something’, being employed in both cases. Although one of the expressions uses the word *aretē* and the other does not, the message they deliver is the same. Patroclus’ words, however, have nothing to do with courage: they clearly imply that in persisting in his present line of behaviour Achilles begins to lose his *raison d’être* in the eyes of others, including posterity. The expressions ‘to profit from a person’s *aretē*’ and ‘to profit from a person’ thus serve as functional synonyms, which seems to indicate that the concept of *aretē* entertained here cuts deep into the core of a person’s identity. This is why I think that the rendering of the word *aretē* as ‘virtue’ is more appropriate in this context than the usual rendering ‘prowess’.

‘Oh, father Zeus and Athena and Apollo’, Achilles says to Patroclus in the continuation of the episode, ‘if only none of all the Trojans would escape death, and none of the Argives, but only you and I could survive destruction, so that we alone could break Troy’s holy crown of towers!’⁴⁷ These words, which are the most powerful expression of Achilles’ extreme individualism in the entire poem, clearly indicate that Nestor’s remark ‘Achilles will be the only one to profit from his *aretē*’ are consistent with Homer’s general characterization of Achilles. The question, however, remains open as to what happens to the *aretē* of one who, like Achilles, refuses to exercise it for a common purpose or, in Nestor’s words, is the only one to profit from his *aretē*. Judging by the subsequent development of the *Iliad* plot, Homer meant to show us that in such cases as this one’s *aretē* ceases to exist.

Further in *Iliad* 16 Patroclus, who eventually succeeds in persuading Achilles to adopt Nestor’s advice, goes to battle bearing Achilles’ armour, fights bravely, and falls at the hands of Hector. The report of his death does not reach Achilles until the beginning of Book 18. Achilles is stricken by grief. In spite of the entreaties of Thetis, who reveals to him that he is destined to die after killing Hector, Achilles’ only wish is to revenge the death of Patroclus even at the cost of his own

⁴⁶ *Il.* 16.29–32.

⁴⁷ *Il.* 16.97–100.

life. Only now does he begin to realize where his uncompromising pursuit of *timē* has brought him:

‘Then let me die directly, since I was not to help my friend at his killing—he has died far away from his native land, and did not have me there to protect him from destruction. So now, since I shall not return to my dear native land, since I have not been a saving light to Patroclus or my many other comrades who have been brought down by godlike Hector, but sit here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth (ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης) —I, a man without equal among the bronze-clad Achaeans in war...’⁴⁸

It can be seen that Nestor’s words ‘Achilles will be the only one to profit from his *aretē*’, Patroclus’ words ‘nobody will profit from Achilles’, and Achilles’ own ‘I am a useless burden on the earth’ amount to much the same. Thus, what follows from Achilles’ case as presented in *Iliad* 11, 16, and 18 is first of all the conclusion that by keeping his *aretē* to himself Achilles has made it non-existent and thus has annihilated his own worth as ‘a man without equal among the bronze-clad Achaeans in war’.

Characteristically, Plato’s Socrates found it appropriate to account for his behaviour at his trial by paraphrasing Achilles’ speech in *Iliad* 18, that is, the very speech in which the crisis of Achilles’ *aretē* comes to a climax:

‘He, if you remember, made light of danger in comparison with incurring disgrace when his goddess mother warned him, eager as he was to kill Hector, you will die yourself—“Next after Hector is your fate prepared”. When he heard this warning, he made light of his death and danger, being much more afraid of living as an unworthy man (τὸ ζῆν κακὸς ὦν) and of failing to avenge his friends. “Let me die forthwith”, said he, “when I have requited the villain, rather than remain here by the beaked ships, a burden on the earth”. Do you suppose that he gave a thought to death and danger?’⁴⁹

The adjective *kakos* in the phrase ‘living as an unworthy man’ is a regular antonym of *agathos* and thus can be interpreted as ‘one deprived of *aretē*’. Just as Achilles’ abstention from participating in the war makes his *aretē* fall into disuse

⁴⁸ *Il.* 18.98–106. According to Gill 1996, 124 and n. 95, the widespread interpretation of Achilles’ situation in the *Iliad* in terms of ‘crime and punishment’ would be inappropriate and misleading. However, Gill’s own interpretation, which is almost exclusively based on *Iliad* 9, fails to acknowledge what Zanker 1994, 9, aptly defined as ‘the change in moral temper between Achilles before and after the conflict with Agamemnon and the death of Patroclus’.

⁴⁹ *Ap.* 28cd; transl. H. Tredennick, slightly adapted. Cf. *Symp.* 179e.

and almost annihilates it, so also Socrates' abstention from the life of philosophical inquiry would annihilate his own *aretē*, that is, his intellectual prowess – a situation in which life is not worth living.⁵⁰

As far as I can see, this is the attitude expressed by Aristotle in his discussion of *aretē* in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.8, the very discussion which concludes with the comparison of life to the Olympian Games quoted above:

With those who identify happiness with virtue or some one virtue our account is in harmony; for to virtue belongs virtuous activity. But it makes, perhaps, no small difference whether we place the chief good in possession or in use, in state of mind or in activity. For the state of mind may exist without producing any good result, as in a man who is asleep or in some other way quite inactive, but the activity cannot; for one who has the activity will of necessity be acting, and acting well.⁵¹

Like Homer's Nestor, Aristotle draws a distinction between the possession (*ktēsis*) of *aretē* and the actual use (*chrēsis*) of it. It can easily be discerned from this and similar passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that Aristotle entertains a concept of virtue according to which it is regarded as an activity, or actualization (*energeia*), of the virtuous state of mind, rather than, to use his own category, as a mere potentiality by which the state of mind (*hexis*) itself, as long as it has not been supported by action, would be characterized.⁵² As far as I can see, this is to put into philosophical language the attitude expressed in Nestor's words 'Achilles will be the only one to profit from his *aretē*'.

It follows from the aforesaid that, in conformity with the later Greek view, in his treatment of the theme of Achilles' wrath in Books 11, 16 and 18 of the *Iliad* Homer introduces the idea that *aretē* cannot be enjoyed in private.⁵³ In view of this, it seems to be more than a mere coincidence that one of the two occurrences of the fixed line 'always to be the best and excel over others', on which, as we saw, the view of the competitive character of Homer's values is mainly based, is that same speech by Nestor in *Iliad* 11 which treats the issue of Achilles' *aretē*: 'The old man Peleus instructed his son Achilles always to be the best and excel

⁵⁰ This theme emerges also in *Ap.* 37c–38a; *Crito* 53b–54b.

⁵¹ *Eth.Nic.* 1.8 1098b30–1099a7.

⁵² Cf. Nussbaum 1986, 324.

⁵³ Although keeping the conventional translation of the *aretē* in Nestor's speech as 'prowess', Hainsworth in his commentary on *Il.* 11.763 gives a similar interpretation of the general idea that underlies Nestor's message to Achilles: 'Prowess in Nestor's world is not a private virtue; it must be displayed publicly and for public purposes'. See Hainsworth 1993, 306.

over others'.⁵⁴ The context of the passage leaves no doubt that Nestor's implication is that Achilles did not follow his father's advice. That is to say, by not exercising the competitive value of *aretē* Achilles failed to fulfil it. The only value that he did fulfil up to the moment of hearing of Patroclus' death is the distributive value of *timē*. Indeed, judging by the magnificent compensation proposed to Achilles by Agamemnon, abstaining from fighting not only did not diminish Achilles' *timē* but in fact even enhanced it. Yet, as we have seen, insofar as his *aretē* was concerned the situation was completely different.

It is hard to see how *timē* and *aretē* thus understood could be held as the supreme values at one and the same time: he who receives the tribute of honour without doing anything to earn it can hardly be a possessor of *aretē*, which can only be achieved by proving one's worth in action.⁵⁵ If we take into consideration that the action in accordance with *aretē* is invariably envisaged as based on mutual emulation of equals, the inference must be that the pursuit of *aretē* emerging in *Iliad* 11, 16 and 18 and the pursuit of *timē* as found in the rest of the poem are mutually irreconcilable. That both nevertheless coexist in the *Iliad* seems to indicate that the inconsistency can only be properly accounted for by turning to the historical background of the Homeric poems.

The contemporary scholarly opinion tends to see the early archaic period as providing the most suitable historical background for Homer.⁵⁶ Thus, according to F. Gschnitzer, the tendency stimulated by the work of M.I. Finley, to regard Homer's as a primitive tribal society bearing no resemblance whatever to any form of society known to us from Greek history has gradually become outdated, and the time has arrived to return to the classical syntheses of G. Busolt and G. Glotz, who placed Homeric society at the beginning of the archaic period, while in R. Seaford's view the presence of the city-state values in the Homeric poems 'forms a picture of an early stage of state-formation'.⁵⁷ This is not to say that everything we find in Homer must necessarily be regarded as contributing to the consistent picture of a historical Greek society which can supposedly be reconstructed on the basis of the Homeric poems. Thus, according to A.M. Snodgrass'

⁵⁴ *Il.* 11.783–84; see above, n. 36.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Eth.Nic.* 1.5 1095b26–30: 'Men seem to pursue honour in order that they may be assured of their merit (ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι); at least it is by men of practical wisdom (ἀπὸ τῶν φρονίμων) that they seek to be honoured, and among those who know them, and on the ground of their virtue (ἐπ' ἀρετῇ); clearly, then, according to them, at any rate, virtue is better'.

⁵⁶ See above, ch. 18, 191–93, and below, ch. 23, 274–75.

⁵⁷ Gschnitzer, 1991, 183–84; Seaford 1994, 10. Cf. Raaflaub 1991, 212: 'Finley's Argumente sind aus historischen Gründen nicht zwingend, und seine Datierung ist schlecht mit den Charakteristika von oral tradition im allgemeinen und oral poetry im speziellen zu vereinbaren'.

famous thesis, contradictions in Homer's depiction of social institutions show that, rather than reflecting a concrete historical society, the Homeric poems offer an amalgam which was created as a result of their centuries-long circulation in oral tradition.⁵⁸ Ian Morris tried to prove Snodgrass wrong by explaining away the inconsistencies in Homer's representation of the institution of marriage and of the devolution of property which Snodgrass studied.⁵⁹ The problem, however, is that, even if Morris is right on this specific point, it would hardly be possible to dispose of numerous other inconsistencies which abound in the Homeric poems.

If, as was shown long ago, the language of Homer is a *Kunstsprache*, and his formulae for weapons exhibit an impossible combination of military technologies used at different historical periods,⁶⁰ why should the situation with institutions and values be any different? In fact, this is what has recently been argued by Robin Osborne, according to whom 'if the material world and the institutions described in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are an unhistorical composite, the values which the poems explore have to be relevant to, and illuminative of, the values of the audience'.⁶¹ It would be difficult, however, to envisage a concrete audience whom the mutually exclusive claims of *timē* and *aretē* could simultaneously address. Rather, these claims reflect what Richard Seaford defined as Homer's 'ideological contradiction', namely that 'aristocratic individualism is on the one hand vital to the community and on the other hand a danger to be controlled by the community'.⁶² Seaford in his turn tends to see this contradiction as reflecting a transitional stage within a single society and thus allows for a 'degree of historicity' in the Homeric poems as we have them. Yet, in acknowledging that the Homeric poems in their entirety arose at the unique historic moment of the birth of the city-state, Seaford's theory, attractive as it certainly is, in fact amounts to denying to these poems their long history in epic tradition. In view of this, it seems wiser to admit that, more than they reflect the state of a concrete historic society, contradictions in Homer's account of values and institutions reflect the state of the Homeric text itself.

As in any traditional poetry, the old and the new exist in Homer side by side, for the simple reason that each successive generation of poets retold anew in the vein of their own age what had been bequeathed to them by their tradition. Since the traditional subjects dealing with the Heroic Age were not only universally

⁵⁸ Snodgrass 1974, 114–25.

⁵⁹ Morris 1986, 105–15.

⁶⁰ See Gray 1947.

⁶¹ Osborne 1996, 153.

⁶² Seaford 1994, 5–6.

known but also accepted as historical truth, the poets were not allowed to mould them in a free and independent way: the Trojan War will end with the Trojan rather than the Achaean defeat, Hector will be killed by Achilles and not vice versa, and so on.⁶³ This is why dissonances between the plot of the poems and what is expressed in the speeches are so important: while the plot is fixed in tradition, the content of the speeches is not; accordingly, the speeches are fit to express the poets' reaction to what they received from their tradition.⁶⁴

This attitude can naturally result in one and the same episode being simultaneously delivered in two perspectives, the traditional and the poet's own. Homer's famous comment on the inequality of exchange in the Glaucus-Diomedes episode in *Iliad* 6 provides a good illustration.⁶⁵ To take one additional example, in *Iliad* 14 the disguised Poseidon says in his exhortation to the heavily pressed Greeks:

‘Argives, are we once more to yield the victory to Hector, son of Priam, so he can take our ships and win glory for himself? That is what he thinks and prays, because Achilles is staying back by the hollow ships in his heart's anger. But we will not feel his loss too strongly (κείνου δ' οὐ τι λίην ποθὴ ἔσσεται), if the rest of us stir ourselves to support each other (ἀμυνέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν)’.⁶⁶

The very concept of the *Iliad* is rooted in the premise that without Achilles' individual contribution the Achaean victory is impossible, and the weight the poem places on the individual *aristeiai* of the other Achaean leaders shows that this is indeed the prevailing attitude. Poseidon's words, in that they give equal weight to the value of the ordinary soldiers' mutual effort, contradict this attitude, and this is why they leave no trace on the subsequent development of the poem's plot. But the same idea of the importance of mutual effort occasionally emerges again—as, for example, in the description of the Greek army on the march at the

⁶³ On the traditional poets' individual creativity within the fixed framework of their plots see above, ch. 12, and Finkelberg 1998, 151–60.

⁶⁴ Cf. Nicolai 1983. Characteristically, it is first of all in direct speech that such anomalies of language as nonformulaic and metrically faulty expressions, linguistic and thematic innovations, etc. are concentrated in Homer. See further Shipp 1972; Griffin 1986 and 1995, 32–35. See also ch. 8 above.

⁶⁵ *Il.* 6.234–36; ‘Then Zeus son of Cronus took Glaucus' wits away from him: he exchanged with Diomedes son of Tydeus gold armour for bronze, a hundred oxen's worth for nine’. Seaford 1994, 15 sees in this ‘the implicit criticism of the increasingly dangerous institution of gift-exchange from the new perspective of commodity exchange, in which inequality is more surprising’. Cf. also above, ch. 8, 92.

⁶⁶ *Il.* 14.364–69.

beginning of Book 3: 'But the Achaeans came on in silence, breathing boldness, their hearts intent on supporting each other (ἀλεξέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν).⁶⁷ This description is closer to the spirit of the hoplite phalanx as celebrated in the poems of Tyrtaeus (characteristically, this is how it was taken by the scholiast) than to the standard behaviour of the Homeric warrior.⁶⁸

Consider again Achilles' words of self-reproach in *Iliad* 18.103–104: 'I have not been a saving light to Patroclus or my many other comrades who have been brought down by godlike Hector, but sit here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth'. While Achilles' obligations to Patroclus, Achilles' 'own' man, are among those cooperative values which, as we saw above, are seen in terms of *timē*,⁶⁹ the very design of the *Iliad* shows that no such terms could originally apply to Achilles' attitude to the rest of the Greeks. The clash between the old aristocratic value of *timē* and the more egalitarian values of the city-state produced by this and similar Homeric usages, showing that the Homeric poems as we have them are relatively late heirs to a centuries-long tradition, justifies in my opinion Snodgrass' caution against approaching these poems as consistent historical evidence. Indeed, considering the political and social changes Greece underwent in the first half of the first millennium BCE, it is not surprising that more often than not a breach would be produced between the traditional values and those which both the poet and his audience held valid. The situation could well stimulate the poets to an overall reinterpretation of traditional subjects along the lines of their own and their audiences' values.⁷⁰ As far as I can see, Homer's criticism of Achilles' behaviour by applying to it the criteria of the city-state value of *aretē* in the very books of the *Iliad* that treat its main theme of Achilles' wrath, and the incongruity thus produced between these criteria and the demands of *timē* which prevail in the rest of the poem, expresses an attempt at such overall reinterpretation of the traditional subject of the *Iliad*.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Il.* 3.8–9.

⁶⁸ On the relevance of hoplite tactics to Homer see Latacz, 1977; van Wees 1994 and 1997, 668–93.

⁶⁹ On Achilles' 'institutional obligations' to Patroclus and the feeling of shame and guilt issuing from his failure in fulfilling these obligations see especially Zanker 1994, 16–17, 100.

⁷⁰ Cf. Nicolai's distinction between the 'affirmative' and the 'kritische Wirkungsabsicht' in the *Iliad* in Nicolai 1983, 9. On the political and social changes at the beginning of the first millennium BCE see ch. 24.

⁷¹ See also below, ch. 27, 323–25. A somewhat different line of interpretation of the same theme seems to be pursued in Books 9 and 24, where Achilles' behaviour is criticized, by Ajax and Apollo respectively, as falling short of the accepted social norms of mutual reconciliation; see *Il.* 9.628–38, 24.46–49.

23 Homer and the Bottomless Well of the Past

A review article of I. Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus* (Berkeley 1998)

Tief ist der Brunnen der Vergangenheit. Sollte man ihn nicht unergründlich nennen?

Thomas Mann, *Joseph und seine Brüder*

1

Until recently, referring to ‘historical myth’ was tantamount to saying that something has no historical substance whatever. Both scholars and the general public had nothing but scorn for myths relating to the past—and the word ‘myth’ itself was generally understood as the opposite of historical truth. However, a marked shift in attitudes towards the concept of historical truth in recent decades cast doubt on the validity of the assumptions from which the traditional approach to myth proceeded. In much current historical research, traditional historiography is rapidly losing its privileged status of a reliable guide to the past, more and more being treated as just one narrative among many. The contextualization of historical narrative within the time and place of its composition that accompanied this development has made the gulf between history and fact even wider, and has actually merged history with myth. This is not yet to say that approaching historiography and myth as phenomena of the same order would necessarily lead to treating historical myths seriously. One approach, which in the present reviewer’s opinion is less productive than others, is to devalue any narrative, whether historical or mythological, that makes a claim to deliver a truthful account of past events; accordingly, it becomes impossible to draw a meaningful distinction between, say, the tradition of the Persian Wars on the one hand and that of the Trojan War on the other. The approach that seems much more promising is the one which, rather than denigrating history by treating it on a par with myth, rehabilitates myth by elevating it to the status of historical source. This is the approach that Irad Malkin adopts in his book.

This in-depth investigation of Greek myth of the aftermath of the Trojan War is expressly designed as a contribution to the study of the history of Greece. This does not mean that the subject of *The Returns of Odysseus* is the historical substance of the myth in question. Although Malkin does not sympathize with those who, to put it in his own words, ‘confuse nonessentialism with disregard of hard facts instead of looking for the dynamism between that which “happens” (e.g., a

shot fired in battle) and that which is continuously influenced by observation (who won the war)', he has little interest in 'myth as containing some kernel of truth, for example, considering whether the *nostoi* reflect actual Greek settlement' (pp. 6–7). Nor does he embrace the recent trend of cultural poetics, which glosses over historic periods in order to create 'a rather essentialist abstraction of "Greek culture"' (p. 23). For Malkin, the story of the Heroic Age is first and foremost a story of the time when the myth of the Heroic Age took its standard form. 'The question raised in this book', he writes in the Introduction, 'is how myths of Odysseus and other *Nostoi* were used to mediate encounters and conceptualize ethnicity and group identity and how such conceptualisations functioned historically, especially in the Archaic period' (p. 5). In combining the historical and the archaeological perspective with that supplied by Greek epic tradition, Malkin unfolds a rich and illuminating picture of how, by appropriating figures of Greek legend as their founders and/or remote ancestors, various population groups, Greeks and non-Greeks alike, negotiated the terms of their coexistence and consolidated their identities in the early first millennium BCE.

According to Greek tradition, two main factors were responsible for the disappearance of the Race of Heroes: their destruction in the wars of Thebes and of Troy and their migration to the 'ends of the earth' (πείρατα γαίης).¹ The two events are inextricably connected in the Trojan saga in that, instead of returning home, most heroes who survived the war went elsewhere, eventually to become founders of new settlements all over the Mediterranean. The entire epic genre, titled somewhat incongruously 'Returns', or *nostoi*, specialized in perpetuating the memory of this event. Most of the poems which belonged to this genre are now lost, but the fragmentary information concerning some of them—as, for example, the epic *Melampodia* usually ascribed to Hesiod—gives us a pretty good impression of the range of the *nostoi* phenomenon. Teucer son of Telamon went to Cyprus where he founded Salamis; Agapenor, the leader of the Arcadians in Homer, also settled in Cyprus where he founded New Paphos; Amphilochous son of Amphiaras went to Pamphylia and Cilicia where he founded Mallus; Mopsus, son of the Theban prophetess Manto, led the migrants not only into Pamphylia and Cilicia but also into Syria and Palestine; Diomedes went to the Adriatic where he became the founder of numerous cities; Philoctetes went to the region of Croton in Italy where he colonized Cape Krimissa, and so on. 'The entire ethnography of the Mediterranean could be explained as originating from the Big Bang of the Trojan War and the consequent Nostos diffusion' (p. 3). Malkin, who deals with

¹ Hes. *Op.* 159–73. Cf. [Hes.] fr. 204. 95–105 M-W; *Cypria* fr. 1 Bernabé/West. See also ch. 15 above.

the western *nostoi* only, analyses the migrations of Nestor, Philoctetes, Diomedes and others in the concluding chapters of his book (Chapters 7 and 8). Above all, however, the Returns was the genre to which the Homeric *Odyssey* belonged. Small wonder, therefore, that *The Returns of Odysseus* gives the poetry of Homer pride of place.

2

After a Phaeacian ship brings Odysseus back to Ithaca, along with the treasures that the Phaeacians bestowed on him—‘the handsome tripods and the cauldrons, the gold and the lovely woven garments’ (*Od.* 13. 217–18)—Athena, whom Odysseus meets upon his landing, advises him to hide the treasures in a cave by the seashore:

‘And now at once let us store away your treasures in some recess of the sacred cave where they may be ordered best’. And with these words she entered the twilit cave, looking for hiding-places there, while Odysseus brought all his gifts inside—the gold, the enduring bronze, the well-made garments that came from the Phaeacians. And when they had all been cunningly stowed away, Pallas Athena sealed up the entrance with a stone.²

This is arguably the only Homeric episode that is actually paralleled in archaeological record. I mean the rich deposit of bronze tripods dedicated in the course of the ninth and eighth centuries BCE in a seaside cave in Polis Bay on Ithaca. Although the epigraphic evidence explicitly pointing to Odysseus as the recipient of the cult is not earlier than the second century BCE, it is difficult not to agree with Malkin that Odysseus was probably worshipped in the Ithaca cave from the establishment of the cult in the middle of the ninth century. Significantly, in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE Polis Bay was an important stopping point for the Greeks sailing to Epirus, Corcyra (Korfu), and Italy. ‘Ithaca was precisely at the geographical point where departing from it or returning there could have been perceived as sailing in the wake of Odysseus, and this perception was linked with the cult of Polis’ (p. 117). The Polis Bay tripods (Chapter 3) are both the cornerstone of Malkin’s discussion and its most recurrent theme.

Malkin has no patience with those who treat the *Odyssey* episode as an *aition*, that is, as relating to a cult that already existed in Homer’s time (pp. 96–98). In his opinion, an *Odyssey*—either the one we have or an earlier variant—must have preceded the cult at Polis Bay and served as its direct stimulus. The alternative is

2 *Od.* 13.363–71. Transl. W. Shewring.

formulated as follows: 'I therefore draw immediately two lines in the sand: the first is the proposition that the *Odyssey*, as we know it, existed in the ninth century. The second and more modest claim is that even if there was no monumental *Odyssey* so early, there was enough of its specific *story* to make its framework and some of its particular episodes meaningful to Greeks of that time' (p. 45; Malkin's emphasis). In the present reviewer's opinion, the first proposition is untenable, if only for the reason that subscribing to it would involve raising the accepted date for the introduction of the alphabet by one hundred years and that for the Homeric *Odyssey* by two. And although Malkin is nevertheless prepared to give the ninth-century *Odyssey* a chance (he discusses the issue at length in the Appendix), he is aware of the difficulty, and this is why he engages mainly in exploring what 'the second and more modest claim' can offer. The result is a significant enhancement of our understanding of the inner fabric of the Homeric *Odyssey*.

Many of the so-called lying stories about Odysseus that are told in the poem by both Odysseus and others refer to Epirus. Especially noteworthy is the story that the disguised Odysseus tells in Ithaca to Eumaeus and Penelope: according to this story, before going back to Ithaca Odysseus left his treasure with the Thesprotian king Pheidon and went to Dodona, to ask the oracle whether he should return home openly or in secret.³ 'If Dodona's answer had been "Return in secret", according to this hypothetical and unrealised nostos, Odysseus' treasure would presumably have been kept in Thesprotia. Thus Thesprotia, the region of Epirus across from Corcyra, fulfils the function of the cave of the nymphs in the "real" story' (p. 129). Significantly, it was with Corcyra rather than with the *Odyssey* never-never land in the far west that Scheria, the Land of the Phaeacians, is usually associated in later sources.⁴ In all probability, Epirus also played a prominent role in the lost epics *Thesprotis* and *Telegony*, as well as in other traditional poems that dealt with the continuation of the Odysseus story. By linking together shreds of evidence relating to the relevance of this story to Epirus and other parts of northwestern Greece, Malkin builds a powerful case for 'the *Odyssey*'s alternatives'—the alternatives, it must be added, of which the *Odyssey* itself was fully aware (Chapter 4). This is what places his book within the context of one of the most hotly debated issues in contemporary Homeric scholarship.

It is generally recognized today that both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* lean heavily upon the nomenclature of Trojan subjects dealt with in other traditional epics,

³ *Od.* 14.314–35; 19.285–302. See also above, chs. 16 and 17.

⁴ See Hellenic. F 77 Jacoby; Thuc. 1.25; Callim. fr.12 Pfeiffer; Ap. Rhod. 4.566–71; 1209–19; Apollod. 1.9.25.

especially in the poems of the Epic Cycle. This development is almost entirely due to the Neoanalytic trend in Homeric scholarship.⁵ Yet, when approached from the standpoint of the theory of oral composition, the parallels between Homer and other epics should be regarded as independent variants of a common tradition. Thus, to quote what Laura Slatkin wrote in her pioneering application of the methods of oral approach to the Homeric *Iliad*, ‘...the Cycle poems inherit traditions contingent to our *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and preserve story patterns, motifs, and type-scenes that are as archaic as the material in the Homeric poems, to which they are related collaterally, rather than by descent. The Cycle poems and the *Iliad* offer invaluable mutual perspective on the recombination of elements deriving from a common source in myth.’⁶ This quotation, which Malkin also adduces (p. 34), would account fairly well for the approach to the Homeric *Odyssey* that he adopts in his book.

It seems at the same time that the *Odyssey* and ‘the *Odyssey*’s alternatives’ cannot be simply placed on one plane as if they were variations on the same theme. Note that ‘the *Odyssey*’s alternatives’, in that they do not presuppose at all Odysseus’ eventual homecoming, sharply disagree with the Homeric *Odyssey*, for which Odysseus’ return to Ithaca is a *sine qua non*: even the prophecy of Tiresias, according to which upon his return to Ithaca Odysseus should leave it again for the country of men who ‘know not the sea, neither eat meat savoured with salt’, makes provision for his eventual homecoming.⁷ By the very fact of turning the alternative versions of the Return of Odysseus into lying stories, the *Odyssey* poet signals their subordinate status in his poem and privileges the version that he offers. In other words, the relationship between the Homeric *Odyssey* and the Odysseus tradition is anything but reciprocal. Homer both reshapes the tradition he inherited and adapts it to his own agenda, which obviously do not concur with those of his sources: thus, a myth of leaving home for foreign lands is transformed in our *Odyssey* into a myth of homecoming. Here as in many other cases, rather than offering just another variant of the common tradition, Homer turns earlier traditions about the Trojan War and the Returns into raw material for his poems. That he is nevertheless anxious to show his awareness of these traditions strongly suggests that he meant his poems to assume the privileged status of metaepics.⁸

5 See further chs. 16 and 18, 188–89.

6 Slatkin 1991, 11–12; cf. above, ch. 16.

7 *Od.* 11.119–37; 23.266–84.

8 See also above, ch. 17 and ch. 18, 193–95.

This however does not change the fact that, in revealing how Homer's version of the Return of Odysseus 'reverberates'⁹ against a broader background of Greek tradition, Malkin's book does for the *Odyssey* what Slatkin's did for the *Iliad*. And not only that. By showing that 'the *Odyssey*'s alternatives' associated the geography of Odysseus' wanderings with such prominent centres of Greek colonization as for example the Bay of Naples (Chapters 5 and 6), Malkin not only vindicates the later sources that persistently associate Odysseus with Italy and Sicily¹⁰ but also restores to life entire layers of the authentic tradition which were deeply buried within the Homeric *Odyssey*. The question is how their relationship is to be interpreted in terms of absolute chronology.

3

Approaching the Homeric poems as documents that throw light on Early Iron Age Greece is in itself hardly new. Although in the decades that followed Schliemann's excavations of Troy and Mycenae it was generally believed that the Homeric poems present an almost exact reflection of Mycenaean Greece, the radical shift in evaluation of Homer's historical background that took place in the middle of the twentieth century has changed this attitude. First, the study of the Homeric formulae has demonstrated that the traditional language is characterized by an extremely high degree of flexibility and adaptation, so that it is absolutely out of the question that everything we find in Homer could have arrived untouched from the Bronze Age. Second, the picture of the Mycenaean society that emerged as a result of the decipherment of Linear B has made scholars realize that Greek tradition, first and foremost the poems of Homer, can hardly be approached as an adequate reflection of the institutions and society of Bronze Age Greece. This last conclusion is almost entirely due to Moses Finley, whose articles of the 1950s and especially the book *The World of Odysseus* (1954) opened a new era in the historical study of Homer.

Finley himself placed the formative stage of the Homeric epics in the so-called Dark Age (ca. 1050 – ca. 800 BCE). Yet, the same argument that made it impossible to see in Homer a reflection of Mycenaean Greece also holds good as regards the hypothesis that the poet who presumably lived in the eighth or even seventh century BCE described a society which preceded him by two hundred years. As Ian Morris put it in a seminal article, 'Trying to find tenth- and ninth-

⁹ Cf. Slatkin 1991, 108.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Strabo's discussion of Odysseus' wanderings in 1.2.11–18 pp. 21–26.

century societies in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is just as misguided as looking for the Mycenaeans'.¹¹ That is to say, if the Homeric epics do allow for reconstruction of a consistent social picture, this picture would rather belong to the time of the poet himself. This is why the contemporary scholarly opinion tends to see the eighth century BCE as providing a more suitable historical background for the Homeric poems.

Malkin's general approach to Homer's chronology is along the lines of the current consensus which places the historical background of the Homeric poems in the first rather than the second millennium BCE. At the same time, his position differs from the majority opinion in that, rather than with archaic Greece, he associates the Homeric *Odyssey* with the period of protocolonization. This automatically places Homer in the ninth or even tenth century BCE (see especially pp. 268–73). Yet, as noted above, insofar at least as the Homeric *Odyssey* is concerned, this position is hardly tenable. But is it really the Homeric *Odyssey* that Malkin addresses? Corcyra, the Bay of Naples, Sicily, which emerge in 'the *Odyssey*'s alternatives' as restored by Malkin, are replaced in the Homeric poem by the Land of the Phaeacians, 'far removed from toiling mankind' (*Od.* 6.8) and by the fabulous islands of Circe, of Calypso, of the Sirens, of the Cyclops. The *Odyssey* geography moves between the social Utopia of the Phaeacians at one pole and the primitive society of the Cyclopes at the other: the real society of Ithaca is placed between these extremes and examined against their background. No actual map, let alone a map of protocolonization, can be drawn on the basis of this geography. To uncover such a map, one has to penetrate into the hidden depths of the *Odyssey*, where 'the *Odyssey*'s alternatives'—or rather, 'the *Odyssey*'s predecessors'—still abide. It is these latter rather than the *Odyssey* as we know it that should be credited with a ninth-century historical background.

This is not to say that the ninth century BCE was also the time when the Greek myth of Returns, including that of the Return of Odysseus, first came into being. Everything suggests that originally the myth of the Heroes who dispersed to the 'ends of the earth' referred to the great migrations which accompanied the historical cataclysm that marked the end of the Bronze Age. The extent of the Mycenaean diaspora is immediately obvious in the East,¹² where the locally made Mycenaean IIC:1b pottery is found in abundance along the entire Mediterranean coast from Tarsos in the north to Ashkelon in the south. The eastern *nostoi* also supply our only example thus far of the tradition of Returns being corroborated

¹¹ Morris 1986, 127. See also ch. 22, 265.

¹² See Finkelberg 2005, 149–60 (with bibliography).

by historical record. I mean the legendary seer Mopsus, the story of whose wanderings and competition in divination with Calchas, Agamemnon's seer in the *Iliad*, was an integral part of Greek tradition about the end of the Heroic Age.¹³ Like Odysseus, Mopsus was credited with founding many cities, among them Aspendus and Phaselis in Pamphylia, Mallus in Cilicia, and Ashkelon in Palestine;¹⁴ in historic times, he shared with Amphilochus an oracle at Mallus and was commemorated in Cilician and Pamphylian place names. But Mopsus is also referred to as the founder of the royal house of Adana on the ninth-century Phoenician—Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription discovered in 1946 at Karatepe in Cilicia. The emergence of Mopsus in the text of the Karatepe inscription allows us not only to explain the toponyms bearing his name but also to provide the tradition of Mopsus' wanderings over Asia with a proper historical background.

In the West too, after the first wave of destruction in the Peloponnese (ca. 1200 BCE), a considerable population influx was attested not only for Achaea in the northwestern Peloponnese but also for the Ionian Islands, in particular for the island of Cephallenia opposite whose shores Polis Bay is situated.¹⁵ Significantly, it is as the leader of the Cephallenians that Odysseus appears in the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2: 'And Odysseus led the great-hearted Cephallenians, those who held Ithaca and Neritus with shaking leaves and inhabited Crocyleia and rough Aegilips, and those who held Zacynthus and inhabited Samos, and those who held the mainland and inhabited the lands opposite.'¹⁶ The association of Odysseus and his men with Cephallenia, which at the end of the Bronze Age was apparently flooded by refugees from the Peloponnese, makes it likely that the story of Odysseus' wanderings was once meant to evoke the Mycenaean migration into this region. This would mean that, just as the seventh-century *Odyssey* reshaped for its own purposes ninth-century stories of protocolonization, so also those latter had reshaped eleventh-century *Odysseys*, which dealt with the collapse of Mycenaean Greece.

The sources at our disposal do not allow us to go farther than that, but it would be reasonable to suppose that even the earliest Odysseus myths that we are able to discern were built on still earlier foundations. At the same time, there

¹³ The tradition of the migration of Mopsus, Amphilochus and Calchas was treated in the epic poem *Melampodia*, see [Hes.] fr. 278, 279 M-W. Cf. Hdt. 7.91. The migration of Calchas is discussed in detail in ch. 16; on the migration on Mopsus see Finkelberg 2005, 150–52.

¹⁴ See esp. Strab. 14.4.3, p. 668; Xanthus 765 F 17 Jacoby.

¹⁵ See Desborough 1964, 222. Cf. Rutter, Lesson 28.

¹⁶ *Il.* 2.631–35.

is no doubt that, like the ninth-century *Odysseys* so convincingly restored in Mal-kin's book, these irretrievably lost myths were also used for establishing meaningful continuities, no matter whether real or fictitious, by means of which the collective identities of those who chose these myths to be their own were articulated. This is what makes historical myths no less indispensable guides to the past than the 'hard facts' of documentary accounts and archaeological findings. In that they encapsulate the essentials of a given community's self-consciousness, the historical myths supply full-scale evidence as regards the world in which people actually lived.

24 Greece in the Eighth Century BCE and the ‘Renaissance’ Phenomenon

Consider the following chain of events. A highly developed civilization collapses. A new civilization, entirely different in character, starts developing on its ruins. Although this new civilization incorporates not a few elements left by its predecessor, it makes these elements integral to the new system and thus changes their original intent. When it becomes fully developed, the new civilization suddenly turns to the past and deliberately suppresses its own originality by identifying itself with its distant predecessor.

This is not Italy of the fourteenth century, but Greece of the eighth century BCE. Small wonder, then, that when the dimensions of the revival in material culture along with the outburst of interest in the Mycenaean past that characterized the transition of Greece from the Dark Age to the Archaic Age became apparent, the term ‘Greek Renaissance’ began to circulate in scholarly literature.¹ At the same time, while most scholars would agree that the ‘Greek Renaissance’ cannot be understood separately from other developments that were characteristic of eighth-century Greece, the reasons for its emergence are still far from clear.

By definition, the idea of a ‘renaissance’ involves two distinct historic periods: that of the idealized past which the renaissance addresses, and that in which the idealization of the past—that is, the ‘renaissance’ as such—takes place. In the first part of this chapter I shall offer an outline of the periods in question as they come to light in contemporary scholarship, while the second part will deal with the manner in which the Mycenaean past was actually construed in archaic Greece.

1

The excavations of Troy and Mycenae initiated by Heinrich Schliemann in the 1870s opened the great era of the archaeological reconstruction of Aegean pre-history. In 1900, Sir Arthur Evans and others began to unearth the highly developed Minoan civilization of Crete. Especially significant was the discovery of the

¹ The term ‘Greek Renaissance’ was first introduced in the 1970s. During the following decade, both the term itself and the phenomenon it addressed became the focus of a lively debate among historians and archaeologists of archaic Greece. See esp. Snodgrass 1971, 416–36, and Coldstream 1977, 341–57, 367–369. See also Coldstream 1976; Hiller 1983, 9–15; Polignac 1995, 128–49; Whitley 1988; Morris 1988.

Aegean scripts—Linear A, Linear B, and Cretan Hieroglyphic. In the years that followed these discoveries, the Minoan civilization was firmly believed to have been the dominant civilization of the Bronze Age Aegean. It was not until 1939, when Carl Blegen and the Cincinnati expedition discovered the Pylos Linear B archives, that the majority of the archaeologists realized what had hitherto been clear only to a few, namely, that we should speak of two Aegean civilizations rather than one: the Minoan civilization of Crete and the Mycenaean civilization of mainland Greece. Although Mycenaean Greece developed later and under considerable Minoan influence, it eventually prevailed, and in the Late Bronze Age Crete became a Mycenaean province. The former Minoan colonies turned Mycenaean, and as from about 1450 BCE Mycenaean influence replaced Minoan influence not only in the Aegean but also in western Anatolia.² In 1953, when Michael Ventris' decipherment of Linear B was made public, it was demonstrated conclusively that the language of the Mycenaean civilization was Greek. As a direct result of these developments, it became possible to reconstruct the history of Greece in the second millennium BCE with a considerable degree of certainty, and an entirely new period, that of Mycenaean Greece, was added to Greek history.

Archaeological record shows little or no break in continuity in the material culture of Greece for the second millennium BCE. To quote the standard account of the period as given by John Caskey:

From the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age onward there was no real break in the continuity of cultural development, in spite of the several spectacular advances and retreats that occurred, and therefore the people of Middle Helladic times must be looked upon as the first true Greeks in the land.³

All this changes dramatically at the end of the second millennium. The destruction levels and depopulation attested at many Mycenaean sites testify to a sharp break in cultural continuity, and the same is true of other sites all over the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴ There can be no doubt that this was the end of an era.

The dialect geography of the Greek language not only substantiates the picture drawn by archaeologists but also points towards the factors responsible for the collapse of Mycenaean Greece. Indeed, even a casual look at the dialect map of historic Greece makes it obvious that this could not be the original picture. Of the so-called Aeolic dialects, Boeotian and Thessalian are found in Greece but

² See esp. Niemeier 1998.

³ Caskey 1973, 139.

⁴ For the overall picture see, e.g., Drews 1993, 8–30.

Lesbian in Asia Minor only; Attic-Ionic and Arcado-Cyprian, as indicated by their names, are also split by the Aegean. Doric is wedged in between Arcadian and Attic, and Doric and Northwestern Greek between Arcadian and the Aeolic dialects. That is to say, the dialect geography of the Greek language vindicates the Greek tradition of the 'Dorian invasion', in that it unequivocally demonstrates the intrusive character of Doric and other West Greek dialects. To quote what Carl Darling Buck, author of *The Greek Dialects*, wrote in 1926: 'even if there were no tradition of a Dorian invasion such a movement would have to be assumed'.⁵ At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that the expression 'Dorian invasion', or, as seems preferable, 'the coming of the Dorians,' relates to miscellaneous population movements from the periphery to the centre of the Mycenaean world, by no means all of them associated with the Dorians proper. Both the dialect evidence and that of Greek tradition indicate unequivocally that, side by side with 'the coming of the Dorians', we should also speak of 'the coming of the (prospective) Boeotians', 'the coming of the northwestern Greeks', and probably also 'the coming of the (prospective) Cretans'.⁶

The arrival of new populations triggered a mass migration of Bronze Age populations of Greece to Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean. The presence of locally made Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery along the Mediterranean coast from Tarso in the north to Ashkelon in the south, the full extent of which has become evident only in recent decades, bears witness to the dimensions of the Mycenaean diaspora.⁷ This is not to say that the Bronze Age population of Greece was entirely replaced by the newcomers from the north. Some regions, such as Attica, Arcadia and Achaea, never became Dorian, while in others the Dorians settled side by side with the earlier inhabitants to create a symbiosis that often lasted till the end of antiquity. The non-Dorian tribe of Argos, the Hynathioi, immediately comes to mind in this connection, but a considerable 'Achaean' population was also present in Triphylia, formally part of Dorian Messenia, and in Laconia itself, where several cities, most notably Amyclae, were captured from 'Achaean' as late as the beginning of the Archaic Age.

The period that followed the end of the Bronze Age (ca. 1100 – ca. 800 BCE) not only represented a sharp break from the Mycenaean civilization but also was

⁵ Buck 1926, 18. Cf. Hainsworth 1982, 858: 'Migration would certainly give rise to the dialect geography we observe'. See also Finkelberg 1994 and 2005, 109–39.

⁶ Boeotians: Thuc. 1.12; northwestern Greeks: Paus. 5.3–4; Cretans: Diod. Sic. 5.80.2; Strab. 14.2.6, p. 653.

⁷ See esp. Hankey 1982; M. Dothan 1989. Cf. Dothan and Dothan 1992, 89–92 and 159–70; cf. Finkelberg 2005, 149–60.

characterized by a profound recession in material culture. It is true that archaeological discoveries of the last decades, first and foremost the famous Lefkandi tomb,⁸ have shown that there were pockets of continuity even in this period. Yet this evidence, indicative as it is of the complex mixture of continuities and discontinuities that characterized the transition to the Iron Age, cannot affect the general assessment of the relationship between the Early Iron Age Greece and its Mycenaean predecessor, let alone account for the contrast with the subsequent epoch. The growth in population and considerable increase in prosperity that are discernible in the archaeological record from the early eighth century BCE still justify the scholarly literature's designation of the preceding period as the 'Dark Age'. However, these were not the only factors that signalled the transition to the Archaic Age.

By the end of the Dark Age, the institution of kingship was replaced almost everywhere in Greece by the city-state. This political innovation was accompanied by profound changes in religion and cult. The Panhellenic cults of Zeus and other Olympians; the Olympic Games and other Panhellenic festivals in which these cults found their fullest expression; free-standing temples holding cult statues of Olympian deities; the Panhellenic epics of Homer and Hesiod celebrating these same deities—all these were inextricably connected with the rise of the city-state. But it is not only in the transformation of the old political and religious system that sharp discontinuities between Mycenaean Greece and archaic Greece can be observed. They are also reflected in the radical change in artistic style; in the complete abandonment of the palace economy; in the development of an innovative system of warfare; in the adoption of a new system of writing—in short, the entire fabric of society was transformed beyond recognition. The Greeks themselves, as indicated by their new self-designation as 'Hellenes' and the new chronology they adopted as from 776 BCE, were well aware that the religious and social developments which transpired in the first centuries of the first millennium BCE signalled the beginning of a new era.

To sum up, the collapse of Mycenaean Greece brought about a radical break in cultural continuity. One of its most important results was that the Greeks of the Archaic Age, rather than directly continuing their Bronze Age past, laid the foundations of a new civilization, that known today as the civilization of classical Greece.

⁸ On the Lefkandi tomb see Blome 1991; Antonaccio 1995, 236–43.

2

In spite of the break in cultural continuity by which the transition to the Iron Age was accompanied, the standard narrative of the past adopted by the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece was the story of the Heroic Age. Men were bigger and stronger then, and they performed marvellous feats of prowess. Their weapons were made of bronze and not of iron, and they were ruled by kings. Mycenae, a small town in historic times, was the capital of a great kingdom. The gods not only kept company with mortals but even consorted with mortal women, begetting mortal offspring. That is why the heroes of Greek legend were considered 'demigods' belonging to the Race of Heroes. The Heroic Age came to an end with the Theban and Trojan Wars, great conflicts devised by Zeus to put an end to the Race of Heroes. This was how the Mycenaean Greek civilization of the late second millennium BCE was remembered in historic Greece. By the eighth century BCE, this story of the Heroic Age and its end in the Trojan War becomes the principal if not the only subject of the mainstream epic tradition. But why would a newly developed civilization, which, as we have seen, introduced a new social organization, a new religion, a new self-identification, and even a new chronology, choose to account for its identity in terms of a remote past?

Significantly, neither the 'coming of the Dorians' nor the migration to the East, the two events mainly responsible for the radical changes that led to the emergence of the political and ethnic map of historic Greece, became part of the standard Greek narrative about the end of the Heroic Age.⁹ The silence of Homer and Hesiod on the issue of the 'Return of the Children of Herakles' (this is how the coming of the Dorians was presented by their own tradition) and the migrations to the East was anything but incidental. The painful historic events that accompanied the end of Mycenaean Greece were replaced in the mainstream Greek tradition by the Trojan War, a mythological construction that apparently was viewed as offering a more satisfactory explanation of the transition of Greece from prehistory to history. It goes without saying, however, that whatever the nature of the historic events underlying the Trojan saga,¹⁰ they cannot account for the destruction levels and depopulation attested in mainland Greece. Another inconsistency inherent in the epic picture of heroic Greece was that, side by side with

⁹ See further below, ch. 27, 320–23.

¹⁰ According to contemporary assessment of the relevant archaeological data, the destruction of Troy VIIa postdates that of Mycenae and Pylos. This conclusion rests on the presence of Late Helladic IIIC pottery in that level; see Easton 1985, 189; Drews 1993, 10 n. 6; Hood 1995, 25. (I am indebted to Martin West for drawing my attention to this evidence.) See also Finkelberg 2011.

acknowledging the destructive effects of the Trojan War, the epic poets contrived to create the overall impression that there was a direct continuity between the Greece of the Heroic Age and historic Greece, in that the former already possessed the political and tribal structure characteristic of the latter. I hope that the following examples, one concerned with epic genealogy and the other with epic geography, will help to illustrate my point. In conclusion, I will also draw upon the evidence offered by the new religious practice of hero-worship.

The *Catalogue of Women*, or *Ehoiai*, a comprehensive genealogical poem composed within the Hesiodic school some time during the Archaic Age, was reconstructed by Reinhold Merkelbach and Martin L. West in their 1967 edition of *Fragmenta Hesiodica*. Study of the new material supplied by the papyri and analysis of both this material and the extant fragments of the poem against the general background of Greek genealogical tradition allowed Merkelbach and West to make sense of what had formerly existed as a bulk of disconnected fragments and to reinstate the *Catalogue* as the most authoritative source on Greek genealogical lore. Their reconstruction demonstrates beyond doubt that notwithstanding the late date of its composition and its unremarkable artistic quality, this is a genuine traditional poem, based on a universally accepted scheme that dominated Greek genealogical lore up to late antiquity. But how old is the scheme on which the *Catalogue of Women* is based?

The following well-known couplet in all probability belonged to the introductory part of the *Catalogue*:

And from Hellen the war-loving king
sprang Doros, Xouthos, and Aiolos delighting in horses.¹¹

The fact is, however, that beyond the genealogical scheme as such, Hellen never figures as a full-blooded mythological personage endowed with a distinctive 'life' of his own. The reason is simple: there never was such a personage. Although the ethnicon 'Hellenes' as such probably belongs to a much earlier period, the Greeks adopted it as a self-definition at some stage in the Archaic Age. Homer applies it only to the inhabitants of Achaia Phthiotis in southern Thessaly, and it is in Achaia Phthiotis that Hellen was generally believed to have been king. Judging by the evidence at our disposal, the Greeks of the Heroic Age were identified as 'Argives', 'Danaans', and, above all, 'Achaeans'.¹²

¹¹ [Hes.] fr. 9 M-W; transl. H.G. Evelyn-White. Cf. Finkelberg 2005, 24–33.

¹² Thuc. 1.3. Cf. *Il.* 2.684; Strab. 8.6.6, p. 370.

That is to say, despite the genealogical prominence given to Hellen in the *Catalogue of Women*, in the final analysis he is not much more than a *post factum* genealogical construct with no substantial Heroic Age background whatsoever. The same would also be true of the other members of the initial group, namely, Hellen's sons Aiolos, Doros, and Xouthos, and Xouthos' sons Ion and Achaïos. It can easily be shown that all of them, with the possible exception of Xouthos, were hardly more than products of genealogical speculation meant to account for tribal divisions among the Greeks of the historic period. Thus, Doros accounts for the emergence of the Dorians at the end of the Bronze Age, Aiolos for the Aeolians of Thessaly and Asia Minor, and Ion and Achaïos for the Ionians of Attica, Euboea and Ionia and for the inhabitants of the historic district of Achaea in the northern Peloponnese. All this makes it clear that the genealogical scheme on which the *Catalogue of Women* is based cannot be traced back to the second millennium BCE. To be sure, this scheme also incorporated genuine genealogical traditions going back to the Bronze Age, but these earlier traditions were eventually subsumed under an overarching scheme purporting to account for the collective identity of the 'Hellenes'. As far as our evidence goes, this scheme was anachronistic throughout, and deliberately so.

Again, the traditional poets undoubtedly were fully aware that the Greeks were called 'Achaeans' rather than 'Hellenes' in the Heroic Age and that the Dorians were not part of the Heroic Age milieu—yet they ignored these facts for the sake of creating, whenever they saw fit, a bluntly anachronistic picture of heroic Greece. I hope that my second example, which deals with Heroic Age geography, will help to make their agenda more obvious.

The Catalogue of Ships introduced in Book 2 of the *Iliad* offers what is supposed to be a comprehensive survey of the political geography of heroic Greece. Quite a few geopolitical maps of Mycenaean Greece have been drawn with its assistance. On the whole, however, the problems of historical interpretation raised by this document are generally regarded as insurmountable. This changes as soon as the Catalogue of Ships is compared to the political map of archaic Greece. The most significant points arising from such a comparison are as follows:¹³

- (1) Homer's picture of Attica, with Athens as its only city, projects onto the Heroic Age the synoecism of Attica, that is, its unification under Athens. Although consistent with the official ideology of Athens, this could by no means have taken place earlier than the archaic period.

¹³ This subject is treated in detail in ch. 25. See also Finkelberg 2005, 170–72.

- (2) Megara, the historical rival of Athens, is omitted from the map, making it possible to represent the island of Salamis, to which both Athens and Megara laid claim, as though it had no association with the latter.
- (3) The possessions of Argos coincide with this Dorian state's reported sphere of influence under king Pheidon in the seventh century BCE.¹⁴
- (4) The territory of Messenia, a Dorian state annexed by Sparta in the seventh century, emerges on the Homeric map as a blank space between Nestor's Pylos and Menelaus's Sparta.

The case of Messenia is especially illuminating, because today we know for certain that this territory was densely populated in Mycenaean times. Hence, if the Catalogue of Ships provides a reliable picture of the political geography of Mycenaean Greece, as many are still inclined to believe, we can reasonably ask what it has done with the towns and leaders representing this territory.¹⁵ All the evidence suggests that the answer to this question should be sought not in the Bronze Age, but in the political situation of archaic Greece.

Now, although Homer hardly mentions the Dorians as such, not only does the Argos of Diomedes correspond, as we saw, to Dorian Argos, but the Sparta of Menelaus corresponds fairly well to Dorian Sparta. However, such geopolitical realities as Argos or Sparta do not properly belong to the Bronze Age, when the centres of the relevant territories were Mycenae, Tiryns, and Amyclae, all of them abundantly represented in Greek legend. Yet, Tiryns and Amyclae, whose treatment in Greek legend shows that their function as administrative and cult centres of pre-Dorian Greece was well known to the Greeks of the Archaic Age, are replaced by the more up-to-date Argos and Sparta and, accordingly, marginalized. That is to say, although it was a matter of common knowledge that the Dorians were newcomers to the Peloponnese, they nevertheless could easily locate themselves on the map of heroic Greece that Homer provided.

Finally, the epic poetry's celebration of the Heroic Age cannot be understood separately from some parallel developments that took place in the same period. The emergence of the hero-cult, another hallmark of the 'eighth-century Renaissance', is one of them. This characteristically Greek cult, closely associated with the cult of the dead, consisted in the worship of personages of Greek legend—many of whom were the heroes celebrated in the poems of Homer and Hesiod—

¹⁴ Strab. 8.3.33, p. 358; cf. Hammond 1975, 694–95.

¹⁵ Homer mentions seven Messenian towns of Agamemnon in *Il.* 9.149–53 and 291–95 and the leaders of one of them in *Il.* 5.541–60, thereby indicating that his failure to place Messenia on his map of heroic Greece was least of all due to ignorance.

at ancient tombs that were supposed to be their burial places. This remarkable coincidence between the traditional poetry, on the one hand, and a new religious practice, on the other, has given rise to the suggestion that the development of the hero-cult was directly influenced by the epic tradition, above all by Homer.¹⁶ But it seems more likely that both expressed the same tendency, which became dominant in that period, towards establishing a continuity between prehistoric and historic Greece. To quote François de Polignac:

The coincidence of the diffusion of both epic poems and offerings in ancient tombs, far from pointing to a strictly causal relationship, testifies rather to a general interest in the memory of the 'heroic ages' that took two close but separate forms.¹⁷

In his 1988 assessment of the hero-cults of Attica and Argolid, James Whitley wrote:

The significance of the emergence of 'hero-cults'... seems ... to be much more directly political than some other authors have allowed for. ... Offerings in Mycenaean tombs ... were part of the means by which the city defined its territorial limits and established a beneficial relationship to a usable, ideological past.¹⁸

That not only Attica but also predominantly Dorian Argolid were engaged in hero-worship clearly indicates that the new practice of establishing 'a beneficial relationship to a usable, ideological past' was also a concern of those who, unlike the inhabitants of Attica, had no reason whatsoever to see themselves as descendants of the Mycenaeans.

In the late eighth century, Dorian Mycenae inaugurated the cult of Agamemnon, and the cult of Menelaus was established at the Mycenaean citadel of Therapne, near Sparta, at approximately the same time.¹⁹ We have seen that epic geography, too, equates the kingdom of Menelaus with historic Sparta. Some hundred years later, the Spartans made a considerable effort to locate and bring to their city the bones of Agamemnon's son Orestes, whom they also made the recipient of a hero-cult. The same Orestes, it should be recalled, was generally believed to have been the last pre-Dorian ruler of what was to become Dorian Sparta, and his descendants were said to have led the Achaeans, whom the Dorians expelled from their lands, to what was to become the district of Achaea in the

¹⁶ Farnell 1921, 340; Coldstream 1976, 8–17; for a discussion see Whitley 1988, 173–82; Antonaccio 1995, 242–43.

¹⁷ Polignac 1995, 139; cf. Hiller 1983, 14, and Morris 1988, 754–55.

¹⁸ Whitley 1988, 181; cf. Antonaccio 1995, 8.

¹⁹ Cf. Snodgrass 1971, 192; Coldstream 1977, 347 and 383; Antonaccio 1995, 147–52 and 155–66.

northern Peloponnese, and to Asia Minor.²⁰ The Spartans' identification with Orestes, the ruler of the population that they displaced, clearly expresses the same tendency, so conspicuous in the Homeric poems, to use the heroic past in a way that would fit the needs of the present.²¹

Conclusions

As a result of the population movements that changed the face of the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age population of Greece was distinctly heterogeneous. Some Bronze Age population groups were displaced by northwestern tribes and left Greece altogether; others settled in new locations in Greece; and still others, despite the turmoil that accompanied the collapse of Mycenaean Greece, remained in their original territories alongside the newcomers. Sooner or later, these heterogeneous population groups had to negotiate the terms of their coexistence. Everything points in the direction that this process culminated in the eighth century BCE, and that, it seems, is why the poetic tradition of the Heroic Age achieved Panhellenic circulation in this very period. That this was the same tradition that had flourished among descendants of the refugees from Mycenaean Greece who had settled in Asia Minor shows clearly enough that not only the populations of mainland Greece, but also large parts of the Greek diaspora had by then become integrated into the new Greek world that emerged out of the Dark Age.²²

In their reconstruction of the past, the Greeks of the Archaic Age applied a strategy which, to use the expression coined by Old Testament scholar Nadav

²⁰ Cf. Polyb. 2.41; Strab. 8.7.1 p. 383; Paus. 7.1.2. In addition, the founders of the Aeolian colonies in Asia Minor claimed to be descendants of Orestes' son Penthilos; see Strab. 9.2.3, p. 401, 9.2.5, p. 403, and 13.1.3, p. 582; Paus. 2.18.6 and 3.2.1; cf. 7.6.1–2.

²¹ On Dorian hero-cults see also Coldstream 1977, 347–48 and 1976, 14; Morris 1988, 756. Malkin 1994, 30, interprets the reburial of the bones of Orestes and other cases of the Spartans' appropriation of the pre-Dorian past as indicative of their 'political use of cult and myth vis-à-vis other Greeks'. Yet, the fact that the same practices are also paralleled in the Homeric poems strongly suggests that there was a broad Panhellenic consensus in favour of crediting the Spartans with a Heroic Age past for the sake of their fuller integration into the body of the 'Hellenes'.

²² Cf. Snodgrass 1971, 456: 'For me, the decisive moment comes when the Greek world can be seen to be moving forward *as a whole*; when the beneficial or disruptive developments in one centre are swiftly reflected in most parts of central and southern Greece, in the islands and in Ionia' (author's emphasis).

Naaman, may be defined as 'the shaping of collective memory'.²³ Rather than being unaware of certain facts about Mycenaean Greece, the Greeks of the Archaic Age either deliberately ignored them or moulded them to fit their own agenda, which consisted in reaching beyond the differences dividing the heterogeneous populations that settled in Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE to create the overarching unity of the 'Hellenes'. The picture of prehistoric Greece thus created became the standard, if not the only account of their past that the Greeks could envisage—so much so that even as critically minded a historian as Thucydides took it for granted that the Trojan War was the first genuinely Pan-hellenic enterprise in Greek history.²⁴

It was thus most likely the need to consolidate the heterogeneous population groups present in Greece from the beginning of the Iron Age that led to the myth of the Heroic Age becoming the foundational myth of the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece. By turning to the heroic past, the new Greek civilization not only acquired the unity it initially lacked but also succeeded in turning the past into an organic part of the present.²⁵ From that time on, the narrative of the Heroic Age became the universally accepted frame of reference—in fact, the only frame of reference—upon which the cultural language common to all those who belonged to the Greek civilization was built. The act of 'renaissance' in which this narrative was created was thus not so much about the past but, rather, about the present and the future. As far as I can judge, the same can be said of the other acts of 'renaissance' known to us from the history of civilization.²⁶

²³ Naaman 1996.

²⁴ Thuc. 1.3. Cf. Snodgrass 1971, 299: 'The great unifying force was the "Heroic Age", in which almost all elements claimed a share, unprejudiced by their later movements'.

²⁵ For a more nuanced picture of the reception of the myth of the Heroic Age in Greek epic tradition see above, ch. 15 and ch. 18, 193–95.

²⁶ An earlier version of Part 2 was read in December 1999 at the conference 'The Mechanisms of Canon-Making in Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Societies,' held at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem, and in February 2000 at the Visiting Fellows seminar at All Souls College, Oxford. The present version was read in full in December 2000, at the international workshop on Genesis and Regeneration held by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and in October 2001 at Princeton University and Dalhousie University; in October 2001 it was also delivered as a Henrietta Harvey lecture at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am grateful to all those present for their criticism and comments.

Part IV: Transmission and Reception

25 Ajax's Entry in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*

The list of Helen's suitors in the *Catalogue of Women*, a late epic poem attributed to Hesiod, is directly related to the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2, in that it is in fact a list of future participants in the Trojan War.¹ That the two catalogues treat the same traditional material is demonstrated above all by their agreement on minor personages: not only the protagonists of the Trojan saga, but also such obscure figures as Podarces of Phylace, Elephenor of Euboea, Thoas of Aetolia, or Menestheus of Athens feature in both Homer and Hesiod, and are characterized by basically the same traditional expressions.² But, though the Hesiodic catalogue is sometimes used as evidence that a given Homeric personage belongs to the authentic tradition,³ it seems that the exegetic potential of this poem has not yet been exploited in full. As I hope to show, the *Catalogue of Women* throws light on one of the most controversial issues in Homeric scholarship, that of the representation of Athens and Salamis in the Catalogue of Ships.

In the Catalogue of Ships, the Salaminian entry contains only two lines:

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis,
and he placed them where the Athenian troops were stationed.

(*Il.* 2.557–58; for the Greek text see below, p. 293)

As is well known, the second line of this passage was suspected in antiquity of being a sixth-century Athenian interpolation, intended to legitimate the annexation of Salamis by Athens, and we shall return to this later. The entry as a whole

1 [Hes.] fr. 196–204 M-W. On the relation to the Catalogue of Ships see M. West 1961, 132–33; Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 166. On the *Catalogue of Women* as a traditional poem see M. Parry in *MHV* 238; Janko 1982, 27–28, 221–25; M. West 1985, 125–26, 135–36.

2 Cf. *Il.* 2.705 Ἰφίκλου υἱὸς πολυμήλου Φυλακίδαο as against *Cat.* fr. 199.5 M-W Ἰφίκλοιο Ποδάρκης Φυλακίδαο; *Il.* 2.541 and *Cat.* fr. 204.53 Χαλκωδοντιάδης μεγαθύμων ἄρχος Ἀβάντων (of Elephenor), *Il.* 2.638 Αἰτωλῶν δ' ἡγεῖτο Θόας Ἀνδραίμονος υἱός as against *Cat.* fr. 198.9 Αἰτωλῶν δ' ἐμνάτο Θόας Ἀνδραίμονος υἱός; *Il.* 2.552 and *Cat.* fr. 200.3 τῶν αὐθ' ἡγεμόνεν υἱὸς Πετεῶο Μενεσθεύς. The only case where the same state is represented by different persons is that of Argos: in Hesiod Helen's Argive suitors are the sons of Amphiaras, and not Diomedes, Sthenelus and Euryalus, who command the Argive contingent in Homer (*Cat.* fr. 197.6, *Il.* 2.563–66). According to M. West 1985, 117, Diomedes and Sthenelus were mentioned as additional suitors from Argos in the lost lines 11–29 of fr. 196.

3 This refers especially to the Athenian commander Menestheus, see Page 1959, 173 n. 79; Kirk 1985, 206.

is one of the most problematic in the *Catalogue of Ships*: its detailed indication of the contingent's location is unique in the *Catalogue*,⁴ reference to the Athenian 'troops' (φάλαγγες) instead of the usual 'ships' (νῆες) is obviously out of line, and, above all, the very brevity of this entry is unprecedented in the *Catalogue* and hardly compatible with Ajax's prominence in the rest of the poem.⁵ Now, whatever the reasons for Ajax's underrepresentation in the *Catalogue of Ships*, comparison with the *Catalogue of Women* shows that these reasons did not apply to the latter poem. In the list of Helen's suitors Ajax is described as exercising control over quite substantial territory:

And from Salamis Ajax, blameless warrior, sought her to wife, and offered fitting gifts, even wonderful deeds; for he said that he would drive together and give the shambling oxen and strong sheep of all those who lived in Troezen and Epidaurus near the sea, and in the island of Aegina and in Mases, sons of the Achaeans, and shadowy Megara and frowning Corinth, and Hermione and Asine which lie along the sea; for he was famous with the long spear.

([Hes.] fr. 204.44–51 M-W; transl.

H.C. Evelyn-White)

In Homer, Troezen and Epidaurus, Aegina and Mases, Hermione and Asine belong to Diomedes' kingdom, Corinth is among the towns of Agamemnon, and Megara is altogether missing.⁶

If Ajax's entry in the *Catalogue of Ships* had been the same as in 'Hesiod's' list of Helen's suitors, no question of his underrepresentation in Homer's *Catalogue* would have arisen. This is not to say, of course, that we can simply point to the Hesiodic fragment and declare that this is what Ajax's entry in Homer should have looked like. We cannot form an opinion as to whether or not 'Hesiod's' version bears on that of Homer before we have answered the following questions: (i) how 'Hesiod's' version stands in respect of the epic tradition; (ii) whether this

⁴ And is not supported elsewhere in the *Iliad*: this was the reason why the line was athetized by Aristarchus, see schol. A to *Il.* 3.230 and 4.273, cf. Kirk 1985, 207–208.

⁵ Ajax's entry is the shortest in the *Catalogue of Ships*. Next in brevity are the entry of the Magnetes under the command of Prothoos (three verses) and that of another Thessalian contingent under the command of Eurypylus (four verses).

⁶ *Il.* 2.560–2.570. Leaf 1910 was probably right when he claimed that 'Hesiod's' way of describing Ajax's control over the territories in question suggests raiding rather than regular possession. Yet this does not alter the fact that Ajax is presented in 'Hesiod' as exercising authority over the lands that in Homer are ascribed to such a prominent leader as Diomedes and even to Agamemnon himself. Hence, unless we are prepared to entertain the possibility that Ajax could raid the territories of Diomedes and Agamemnon and also (as the *Iliad* clearly suggests) be on good terms with them, it should be concluded that the Homeric and the Hesiodic versions are mutually incompatible.

version is compatible with the general context of the *Iliad*; and (iii) what might be the reason for the discrepancy between the two versions.

1 [Hes.] fr. 204.44–51 and the epic tradition

Although Homer and ‘Hesiod’ give two different versions of the allegiances of one and the same geographical area, their descriptions of this area are strikingly similar. Compare the following:

Il. 2.557–62, 569–70

Αἴας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν δυοκαίδεκα νῆας,
 στήσε δ' ἄγων ἴν' Ἀθηναίων ἴσαντο φάλαγγες.
 Οἱ δ' Ἄργος τ' εἶχον Τίρυνθά τε τειχιόεσσαν
Ἑρμιόνην Ἀσίνην τε, βαθὺν κατὰ κόλπον ἐχούσας,
Τροίῃν' Ἡϊόνας τε καὶ ἀμπελόεντ' Ἐπίδauρον,
 οἳ τ' ἔχον Αἴγιναν Μάσητά τε κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν,
 τῶν αὖθ' ἡγεμόνευε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης ...
 ...Οἱ δὲ Μυκῆνας εἶχον ἐϋκτίμενον πτολίεθρον
 ἀφνειὸν τε Κόρινθον ἐϋκτιμένας τε Κλεωνάς...

[Hes.] fr. 204.44–51

Αἴας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἀμώμητος πολεμιστῆς
 μνᾶτο· δίδου δ' ἄρα ἔδνα ἐ[ο]ικότα, θαυματὰ ἔργα·
 οἳ γὰρ ἔχον Τροίῃνα καὶ ἀν[χ]ίαλον Ἐπίδauρον
 νησὸν τ' Αἴγιναν Μάσητά τε κοῦροισι Ἀχαιῶν
 καὶ Μέγαρα σκιόνετα καὶ ὄφρυόνετα Κόρινθον,
Ἑρμιόνην Ἀσίνην τε παρέξ ἄλλα γαιεταώσας,
 τῶν ἔφατ' εἰλίποδας τε βόας κ[α]ὶ [ἴ]φια μῆλα
 συνελάσας δώσειν· ἐκέκαστο γὰρ ἔγχρ' μακρῶι.

Since the publication in 1907 by W. Schubart and U. von Wilamowitz of the *Pap. Berol.* 10560, to which our fragment belongs, neither its similarity to *Iliad* 2.560–62 nor its divergence from *Iliad* 2.557–58 as regards Ajax's domain has drawn much scholarly attention. The only reason I can see for this is that from the standpoint of the traditional Homeric scholarship the supposed interval of time between these two texts was regarded as crucial for the evaluation of the Hesiodic fragment:⁷ insofar as the poet of the *Catalogue of Women* was close to Homer he

⁷ According to M. West 1985, 130–37, esp. 136, the *Catalogue of Women* was composed in the period between 580 and 520 BCE. Even if we raise the date of the poem to the beginning of the sixth or the end of the seventh century (see Janko 1982, 85–87 and 247–48 nn. 37, 38), it would still be much later than the accepted date for the *Iliad*.

could be seen as imitating him, and in so far as he diverged from his alleged model he could be seen as deliberately improving on Homer's version.⁸ However, as soon as we admit that the interval of time does not separate two thoroughly individual compositions but rather the dates at which two traditional poems were fixed, our assessment of the way in which they relate to each other must adopt a different line. Indeed, the impact of Milman Parry's work on Homeric scholarship was felt, among other things, in the recognition of the fact that parallels between two traditional texts, striking as they may be, can well indicate that these are two independent variants of a common tradition.⁹ Consequently, the fundamental question in assessing the character of the relation between the two is whether or not they should be viewed as such mutually independent variants. This is exactly the question whose relevance to the Homeric and the Hesiodic versions I intend to examine.

The points of coincidence between the two versions are so obvious that we may say with certainty that they are mutually related. In both of them Hermione and Asine, Troezen and Epidauros, Aegina and Mases go together, coupled within a single verse.¹⁰ Note also the formulaic affinity between the two versions: Ἑρμιόνην Ἀσίην τε at the beginning of the verse, καὶ – ~ ~ – Ἐπίδauρον at the end, and Αἴγιναν Μάσητά τε κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν after the first foot. Even when the same localities are characterized by different epithets, these epithets are metrically equivalent (βαθὺν κατὰ κόλπον ἐχούσας in Homer and παρὲς ἄλγαιεταώσας in 'Hesiod', ἀμπελόεντ' in Homer and ἀγ[χ]ίαλον in 'Hesiod'), showing that they are in fact alternative fillings of the same underlying pattern.

Against this background, the points on which the two versions differ are especially illuminating. These points of divergence are as follows.

(a) *Il.* 2.561 καὶ ἀμπελόεντ' Ἐπίδauρον and [*Hes.*] fr. 204.46 καὶ ἀγχίαλον Ἐπίδauρον. The epithet used by 'Hesiod' is undoubtedly a traditional one: it is encountered twice in Homer (notably, both occurrences fall in the *Catalogue of*

⁸ This view is still held in Meier 1976; cf., however, Janko's comment on Meier 1976, 184–86, that the variations between parallel lines in Homer and 'Hesiod' 'suggest *oral* knowledge and recomposition' (Janko 1982, 248 n. 39; Janko's emphasis).

⁹ As G.P. Edwards put it in his discussion of the phrases common to Hesiod and the *Odyssey*: 'We can never rule out the existence of an older place X, which provided a common source for both A and B at the lines in question, so making their chronological relationship impossible to determine', see G.P. Edwards 1971, 189. The conditions in which *imitatio* can be admitted in oral poetry have been tentatively formulated in Janko 1982, 225–28.

¹⁰ Neither the Homeric Εἰῶνες (an unknown town) nor the Hesiodic Megara are mentioned in the other version; note, however, that the formula μέγαλα σκιδέοντα (seven times in the *Odyssey*) is identical with 'Hesiod's' expression for the city of Megara, cf. Meier 1976, 178–79.

Ships), though not in the same metrical position:¹¹ a direct parallel to the Hesiodic usage can be observed outside Homer, see *Hymn to Apollo* 32 καὶ ἀγχιάλη Πεπάρηθος.¹² As distinct from this, Homer's epithet ἀμπελόεντ' is in itself unique: elsewhere, this epithet takes the form ἀμπελόεσσαν and regularly occurs at the end of the verse.¹³ As there seems to be no other evidence that Epidaurus was especially famous for its vines, it is possible that the Hesiodic epithet 'near the sea' gives a more appropriate characterization of the town.

(b) *Il.* 2.560 Ἑρμιόνην Ἀσίνην τε, βαθὺν κατὰ κόλπον ἔχουσας, and [Hes.] fr. 204.49 Ἑρμιόνην Ἀσίνην τε παρέξ ἄλα ναιεταώσας. 'Hesiod's' expression obviously derives from the widespread pattern πόλεις εὖ ναιεταώσας.¹⁴ As for the Homeric one, its only parallels seem to be *Hymn to Demeter* 187 παῖδ' ὑπὸ κόλπῳ ἔχουσα and 238 καὶ ἐν κόλποισιν ἔχουσα. Note that 'Hesiod's' description is free of the factual error contained in Homer's version: contrary to what Homer says, Hermione and Asine were not located on the same gulf.¹⁵

(c) *Il.* 2.570 ἀφνειὸν τε Κόρινθον and [Hes.] fr. 204.48 καὶ ὄφρυόνετα Κόρινθον. As distinct from the Epidaurus epithets, those for Corinth are not supposed to fill the same portion of the line: in Homer the noun-epithet combination for Corinth occupies the beginning and in 'Hesiod' the end of the verse. Though the Hesiodic epithet is paralleled in Ἴλιος ὄφρυόεσσα at *Iliad* 22.411, the full equivalent to his usage is again found outside Homer, see the line Πειρήνην οἰκεῖτε καὶ ὄφρυόνετα Κόρινθον in a response of the Delphic oracle quoted by Herodotus.¹⁶ Homer's ἀφνειός, widespread in the epics, is usually employed as an epithet of persons:¹⁷ if it is correct that this epithet could not have been applied to Corinth before the eighth century BCE,¹⁸ then the alternative epithet ὄφρυόεις, relating as it does to the natural fortress of Acrocorinth and thus appropriate in describing the city at any period of its existence, may well be a more ancient one.

11 *Il.* 2.640 /Χαλκίδα τ' ἀγχίαλον, 697 /ἀγχιαλὸν τ' Ἀντρώνα (ἀγχιάλην Zenodotus, see schol. A *ad loc.*).

12 Note that 'Hesiod's' use of the epithet involves *brevis in longo* which could have been avoided if the poet had used the alternative form ἀγχιάλην.

13 *Il.* 3.184 Φρυγὴν ... ἀμπελόεσσαν, 9.152, 294 Πήδασον ἀμπελόεσσαν, *H.Ap.* 438 Κρίσην... ἀμπελόεσσαν; cf. *H.* 9.5.

14 Or ναιετώσας or ναιεταούσας, see *Il.* 11.2.648, *Od.* 8.574, [Hes.] fr. 141.17 M-W, *H.Ap.* 175, cf. Meier 1976, 186 n. 4.

15 See Kirk 1985, 209.

16 Hdt. 5.92 (= Parke and Wormell 1956, 5, N 7).

17 Or of personal estate, see *Il.* 14.122, *Od.* 1.393 (δῶμα, δῶ); *Od.* 1.232, 17.420, 19.76 (οἶκος): the only parallel to Homer's application of this epithet to a place is [Hes.] fr. 240.1–2 M-W (on Ellopia).

18 Dunbabin 1948, 60, 66, cf. Salmon 1984, 18.

(d) *Il.* 2.562 οἱ τ' ἔχον Αἴγιναν Μάσητά τε κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν and [Hes.] fr. 204.47 νῆσόν τ' Αἴγιναν Μάσητά τε κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν. That νῆσόν τ' Αἴγιναν is a genuine epic formula follows from its additional emergence as νῆσός τ' Αἰγίνην at *Hymn to Apollo* 31. Accordingly, Homer's οἱ τ' ἔχον Αἴγιναν should be taken as a modification of the fixed formulaic line which survived in full in the Hesiodic poem.¹⁹

We cannot say, therefore, that 'Hesiod's' divergences from Homer can be explained away simply as corrections introduced into the Homeric version by a more geographically competent poet.²⁰ This might well have been the case if the expressions used in his version were unique. We saw, however, that where 'Hesiod' diverges from Homer he uses traditional expressions attested elsewhere in the epic corpus.²¹ His ἀγγιᾶλον Ἐπίδauρον should be read not against the Homeric ἀμπελόεντ' Ἐπίδauρον, a unique modification on a traditional expression, but against ἀγγιᾶλη Πεπάρηθος at *Hymn to Apollo* 32, and his παρὲξ ἄλᾳ ναιεταώσας not against the Homeric βαθὺν κατὰ κόλπον ἐχούσας, again a unique expression, but against the formula πόλεις εὖ ναιεταώσας. Apart from this, if we assume 'Hesiod's' dependence on the Homeric version we shall never be able to explain the source of the formula νῆσόν τ' Αἴγιναν. All these leave no doubt that [Hes.] fr. 204.44–51 is a genuine traditional version independent of *Iliad* 2.557–70.

2 [Hes.] fr. 204.44–51 and our *Iliad*

It follows from the aforesaid that Ajax's characterization in the Catalogue of Ships was not the only characterization of this hero known to the epic tradition. Naturally, this fact in itself does not mean that 'Hesiod's' version, traditional though it is, should be adopted for our *Iliad*, the more so as we cannot be sure that this version is sound from the inner standpoint of the Homeric poem. It is indeed reasonable to expect that, if Ajax's representation in the Catalogue of Ships had been like that in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, the *Iliad* as we have it would have been affected at more than one point.

¹⁹ Cf. Allen 1909, 84. Note that, according to Strabo 8.6.16, p. 375, some preferred to read νῆσόν τ' Αἴγιναν into *Il.* 2.562; this variant also appears in what is supposed to be a quotation of *Il.* 2.559–68 in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, see *Certamen* 292 Allen.

²⁰ As seems to be implied in Meier 1976, 185–86.

²¹ This is also true of the general context of the passage. Thus, the unhomeric θαυματὰ ἔργα ([Hes.] fr. 204.45) is paralleled in *Scutum* 165, *H.Herm.* 80, 440, *H.* 7.34 (on this expression, see Janko 1982, 137, 184), and the unhomeric ἀμώμητος πολεμιστής can be compared with *Scutum* 102 ἀμώμητος Ἴόλαος and *H.* 33.3 ἀμώμητον Πολυδεύκεα.

First of all, the representation of Diomedes and, to a lesser degree, of Agamemnon, the two Achaean leaders to whom the *Catalogue of Ships* ascribes the lands attached to Ajax in the Hesiodic version, would be modified. Contrary to what one might expect, this would not raise serious difficulties as far as the rest of the *Iliad* is concerned. As G.S. Kirk has pointed out, 'in the rest of the poem the question of his [Diomedes'] contingent, exactly whom he commands, is kept strangely silent (especially so in the fifth book which he dominates)...'.²² Moreover, the alternative distribution of Diomedes' lands as suggested by 'Hesiod's' version would perhaps make the charting of the borders of his kingdom less difficult, in that it would reduce his status in respect of Agamemnon to more natural proportions, leaving him with Argos and Tiryns only.²³ As for Agamemnon, I cannot see how taking Corinth (the only town of Ajax in his possession) from him could make his kingdom more problematic than it is now.

Secondly, adoption of the Hesiodic version would entail that Megara would at last occupy its rightful place among the participants in the Trojan War.²⁴ True, the absence of Megara, a Dorian city in historic times, from the *Catalogue of Ships* is often viewed as consistent with the *Catalogue's* presumed Mycenaean origins.²⁵ There is however reason to doubt whether denying 'Mycenaean legitimation' to every place that does not appear in the *Catalogue of Ships* is a methodologically valid approach: on this assumption, such important sites as Dendra and Gla could not be seen as Mycenaean only because the *Catalogue of Ships* does not mention them.²⁶ Another important caveat is that the argument proceeding from the 'Dorian background' can with equal reason be applied also to the rest of the towns on our list: all of them were Dorian in historic times, all of them (except for Asine) are poor in Mycenaean remains,²⁷ and all of them (except for Troezen) are only too rarely mentioned in Greek legend. When viewed in this perspective, the presence of Megara on the map of the *Catalogue* would certainly be more justified than, say, the presence of Epidauros, a town which has so far yielded no Mycenaean remains and which does not appear in the mythological tradition.

Thirdly, 'Hesiod's' picture of Ajax's domain is distinctly at variance with the inferior status of Salamis in respect of Athens as suggested by the *Catalogue of*

²² Kirk 1985, 180.

²³ On the problem of Agamemnon's and Diomedes' representation in the *Catalogue of Ships* see Page 1959, 127–28, 129–32; Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 70–72; Giovannini 1969, 256–27; Kirk 1985, 180–81.

²⁴ This fact has been given due prominence in Allen 1909, 83–84.

²⁵ See, e.g., Page 1959, 120; Kirk 1985, 239.

²⁶ Cf. Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 154–55.

²⁷ See the data adduced in Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 62–63.

Ships.²⁸ There can indeed be no doubt that the strategic position of Salamis as regards Athens is such that at any historic period a Salaminian empire like that outlined in 'Hesiod' must have constituted a direct threat to the authority if not the very independence of the Athenian state. Accordingly, a situation where Salamis was strong enough to control the Epidaurian peninsula, Aegina, and the Isthmus, could only have occurred if Athens had been politically weak. It seems to be more than a coincidence that just such Athenian weakness is attested in Greek tradition concerning the Trojan War. As is well known, the role played in the war by Athens is altogether insignificant. The commander of the Athenian contingent at Troy is the very embodiment of this insignificance: the man who leads the Athenians is neither Theseus nor one of his sons but the otherwise unknown Menestheus.²⁹ Consider now the position of Athens at the time of the Trojan War as attested in Greek tradition. Theseus, having abducted the maiden Helen, retires from Athens, and is found either in the Underworld or in exile; Attica, including Athens, has been ravaged by the Dioscuri, who took away with them not only Helen but even Theseus' mother Aethra; for the time being, Theseus' dynasty has been interrupted, and a stranger (Athenian on the mother's side only), Menestheus, is king in Athens.³⁰ This is the context in which the Salaminian empire makes its appearance at Athens' very door. It is this domain and not the alleged

28 Both Schubart and Wilamowitz 1907, 37–38, and Leaf 1910 saw in 'Hesiod's' description of Ajax's domain confirmation of the political situation suggested by the *Catalogue of Ships*: namely, if Ajax is described as able to raid the lands of all his neighbours except for Attica, this means that he was an Athenian vassal. But it is hard not to agree with Martin West who, proceeding from the inner standpoint of the *Catalogue of Women*, finds this reading tendentious: after all, there is no indication in the Hesiodic poem that the lands in question were controlled by someone other than Ajax, see M. West 1985, 132 n. 21. Note also that though the suitors from Argos do appear in the Hesiodic list (see n. 2 above), the only characterization of this state given here is that it was 'very near' to Sparta ([Hes.]. fr. 197.7 M-W).

29 The relation of this Athenian commander to Ajax shows the opposite of the alleged subordination of Salamis to Athens: on the few occasions that Menestheus' fighting is described in the *Iliad*, he is found associated with Ajax and his brother Teucer, but very much in Ajax's shadow, see *Il.* 12.331–77, 13.190–7, 690–710, cf. Kirk 1985, 206.

30 For a representative collection of the testimonia see Page 1959, 172–75 nn. 78–79. Page dismisses the Dioscuri invasion of Attica as late fiction; however, the tradition of this inroad goes well with the fact that in Homer Theseus' mother Aethra is in Troy as Helen's servant, see *Il.* 3.144; Aethra's sojourn in Troy was also attested in the Cyclic *Iliou persis* (Allen 1912, I08.10 and 139 (= *Sack* 6 and arg. 4 West) and, according to Paus. 5.19.3, on the Corinthian Chest of Cypselus. As was pertinently observed by M.P. Nilsson, a line mentioning the mother of Theseus as Helen's servant 'is not of such a nature as the Athenians would have introduced in order to enhance the mythical fame of Athens', see Nilsson 1932, 168.

greatness of Athens that fits in with the configuration of forces fixed in the Trojan saga.

Finally, the issue of Ajax's underrepresentation. It is significant that Ajax's entry in the *Catalogue of Ships* is not the only Iliadic passage where such underrepresentation can be observed. There is also the famous case of the *Teichoscopia*, where Helen, asked by Priam about the identity of Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Ajax, gives detailed explanations only as regards the two former; as for Ajax, she disposes of him in the shortest possible answer, 'that is the enormous Ajax, a bulwark of the Achaeans', and proceeds to a description of Idomeneus about whom she has not even been asked.³¹ It is possible that something similar also happens to Ajax in the appendix to the *Catalogue of Ships*, purporting to answer the questions as to who is the best warrior and whose are the best horses among those present: while Eumelus and his horses are given five verses, 'the best among men', Ajax, has only one (*Il.* 2.768). According to the hypothesis put forward by D.L. Page, Ajax is underrepresented in the *Iliad* because he did not originally belong to the Trojan saga but was imported into it from a much more ancient tradition, the main evidence for this being his tower-like body-shield.³² However, this interpretation is difficult not only because Ajax is deeply rooted in the Trojan saga as we have it,³³ but also because it ignores the fact that Ajax is not an isolated figure in Greek heroic tradition. If we raise his date, we must also raise the date for his father Telamon; the latter, however, is firmly associated with the generation preceding that of the Trojan War in virtue of being the brother of Peleus and the comrade of Heracles.³⁴ As distinct from this, adoption of the version of Ajax's domain given by 'Hesiod' allows us to reinstate him in a manner fitting his prominent position in the Trojan saga without at the same time forcing us to abandon his well-attested genealogy.

Thus, 'Hesiod's' version is not only not incompatible with the rest of the *Iliad* but it even throws light on such difficult points as the underrepresentation of

³¹ *Il.* 3.229. Cf. Shipp 1972, 239: 'The description of Idomeneus ... which is commonly considered to have been inserted, truncating the description of Ajax'. Kirk 1985, 208, 297–99, seems to hesitate between adopting the above explanation and the psychological interpretation proposed in A. Parry 1966, 1197–200. However, Parry's interpretation is uneconomic in that it cannot account for other cases of Ajax's underrepresentation in the *Iliad*.

³² Page 1959, 147, 232–35.

³³ Cf. Kirk 1985, 208.

³⁴ [Hes.] fr. 250 M-W, Pind. *Nem.* 3.37ff., 4.25ff., *Isthm.* 6.27ff. Sn., Apollod. 2.133. Another guarantee that Telamon is a contemporary of Heracles is that Ajax's half-brother Teucer, who participates in the Trojan War, was born to the Trojan princess Hesione, a sister of Priam taken by Telamon as part of his booty after Heracles' sack of Troy, cf. Soph. *Ai.* 1299ff., Apollod. 3.162.

Ajax and the insignificance of Athens in the Trojan War. In view of this, 'Hesiod's' description of Ajax's domain seems more robust than that in Homer.

3 [Hes] fr. 204.44–51 and the Athenian 'recension' of Homer

Adoption of the Hesiodic version implies that details of Ajax's political background have been deleted from the *Catalogue of Ships* and probably also from the rest of the *Iliad*. The question of course is by whom, when, and for what purpose. It is significant in this connection that the Athenian-Salaminian entry in the *Catalogue of Ships* is the very passage to which the greatest part of our evidence concerning the sixth-century Athenian 'recension' of Homer relates.³⁵ In the light of an additional piece of evidence which, I believe, the Hesiodic fragment provides, it may be useful to test against this fragment the main arguments denying Athenian editorial activity concerning the *Catalogue of Ships*. As far as I can see, there are two such arguments: that proceeding from the text of the *Catalogue* and that proceeding from the state of our evidence.

It has been claimed that the text of the Athenian and Salaminian entries in its present form does not justify the inference of a large-scale revision: even if we admit that both the praise of the Athenian commander Menestheus at *Iliad* 2.553–55 and the location of the Salaminian fleet next to the fleet of Athens at *Iliad* 2.558 have been interpolated, such interpolations can only be qualified as cosmetic and cannot substantiate the claim of a 'recension' on a greater scale.³⁶ This argument is undoubtedly sound as long as the version of Homer is our only option. However, the alternative version in 'Hesiod' shows that there is reason to expect real changes not so much in the location of the Salaminian fleet but in the fact that Salamis was dissociated from Megara whereas the latter was totally deleted from the map. If we add to this that Homer's picture of Attica, with Athens as its only city, is both unprecedented in the *Catalogue* and anachronistic in that it suggests that the synoecism of Attica has already taken place,³⁷ we shall have an excellent

³⁵ Diog. Laert. 1.57 (quoting the fourth-century Megarian historian Dieuchidas), Strab. 9.1.10, p. 394, Plut. *Sol.* 10.1, Diog. Laert. 1.48, schol. B to *Il.* 2.557. The reliability of this evidence has been fully discussed in Merkelbach 1952, accepting it as reliable, and Davison 1955, rejecting its reliability. See further below, ch. 31.

³⁶ Allen 1909, 84; Davison 1955, 18, and 1962, 220, 239; Kirk 1985, 180.

³⁷ Which agrees with the Athenian tradition that the synoecism of Attica took place under Theseus but disagrees with historical evidence, see the discussion by Andrewes 1982, 360–63. Cf.

case for editorial activity the main targets of which were not so much harmless interpolations flattering Athenian national pride but rather large-scale updating of the inherited map of heroic Greece in view of the contemporary Athenian interest. In that case, the praise of Menestheus and the location of the Salaminian fleet can be no more than by-products of this activity.

Another argument against the Athenian 'recension' is that in the last analysis our evidence on it is in one way or another associated with Megara.³⁸ It is reasonable to suppose that if there was indeed some Athenian interference with the Catalogue, other Greek states would not have passed this over in silence. However, in supposing this we take it for granted that Athens was the only Greek state to profit from the 'recension', but this is not what comparison with the Hesiodic version shows us. Note that in Homer the state that possesses the greatest part of the Hesiodic Ajax's lands is Argos. Now, if we take the Hesiodic picture as a starting-point, we shall see that Argos' possessions have not simply been enlarged: in fact, they have been brought into correspondence with this state's reported sphere of influence under king Pheidon in the seventh century BCE.³⁹ Since Strabo describes Argos' expansions under Pheidon as restoration of the 'lot of Temenus', it can be inferred that these also were (or were claimed to have been) Argos' domains under this first Dorian king.⁴⁰ As we proceed, it will become clear that from the Corinthian point of view as well the political situation fixed in the Homeric Catalogue is much more satisfactory than it would have been if Corinth had been coupled with the rival state of Megara as in 'Hesiod',⁴¹ or dominated by an actually existing power as would have happened if it had been transferred to Argos together with the other territories of the Hesiodic Ajax. Corinth's position in the Catalogue of Ships, where it is presented as a vassal of the empire of Agamemnon that had long ago ceased to exist, is free from such unpleasant political associations. Moreover, this position is also historically consistent: according to the Corinthian claim, the Dorian Corinth was founded not by a Temenid but by a

Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 56, suggesting that such important towns in Attica as Marathon and Eleusis 'were deliberately omitted in order to project the synoecism back into the heroic past', and Giovannini 1969, 26, taking Homer's description of Attica as conclusive proof of the Catalogue's late origin.

³⁸ Davison 1955, 156–17 and 1962, 239. Cf. also Allen, 1907, 18 and 1909, 84–85.

³⁹ On Pheidon's domain see Hammond 1982b, 338–39; cf. Giovannini 1969, 26.

⁴⁰ On the 'lot of Temenus' see Strab. 8.3.33, p. 358; cf. Hammond 1975, 694–96, and 1982a, 715.

⁴¹ Corinth annexed part of the Megarian territory as a result of a series of wars concluded ca. 700 BCE, see Hammond 1982b, 334.

Heraclid Aletes who was not related to the Argive house of Temenus.⁴² Accordingly, of all the towns on the list, Corinth is the only one not associated with the 'lot of Temenus', a situation reflected on the Homeric map.

To judge from the absence of Messenia, Sparta is the next most probable candidate. This Dorian state annexed by Sparta in the seventh century BCE emerges on the Homeric map as a blank space between Nestor's Pylos and Menelaus' Sparta.⁴³ This territory had been densely populated in Mycenaean times,⁴⁴ so that we have good reason to ask where the towns and leaders representing it are to be found in the Catalogue of Ships. The seven Messenian towns of Agamemnon, mentioned in *Iliad* 9.149–53 and 291–95 and the leaders of one of them falling in battle in *Iliad* 5.541–60 may be seen as providing at least some of the clues.⁴⁵ The absence of Messenia from the map of the Catalogue can tentatively be connected with the arbitration on the Salaminian issue between Athens and Megara (probably, in 560s),⁴⁶ for Sparta was the arbitrator who decided in Athens' favour. According to literary tradition, the Athenians quoted to the five Spartan arbitrators the Salamis entry in the Catalogue of Ships, in which the ships of Ajax had already been placed alongside the Athenian contingent;⁴⁷ that the deletion of Messenia affected the outcome of the arbitration is a tempting conjecture. However that may be, the tradition of the Athenian-Megarian arbitration strongly suggests this event as a *terminus ante quem* for the Athenian 'recension' of the Catalogue of Ships, while the subsequent introduction of the Panathenaic rule was exactly what would give the revised version the status of a normative text.⁴⁸

Now if Argos is satisfied in that it finds the 'lot of Temenus' restored in the Catalogue of Ships, if Corinth sees its claim for independent origin supported by Homer, and Sparta finds Messenia deleted from the map, there is no reason why these states should raise their voices against a catalogue in which Salamis is dominated by Athens, Megara is altogether missing, and the synoecism of Attica under Athens had been completed even before the Trojan War. This may well be indicative of the means by which the Athenians were able to achieve wide recog-

⁴² See Dunbabin 1948, 63–65; cf. Hammond 1982a, 722.

⁴³ See Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 75 Map 4.

⁴⁴ See the map adduced in Blegen 1975, between pp. 171 and 172. The Dorian Messenia was still inhabited by its former population, see Huxley 1962, 31–22 and Hammond 1982, 731 and 1982b, 327–28.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 89 n. 37.

⁴⁶ See Andrewes 1982, 373.

⁴⁷ Arist. *Rhet.* 1375b30, Strab. 9.1.10, p. 394, Plut. *Sol.* 10.1.

⁴⁸ See also below, ch. 31, 373.

dition of their version, the more so as we cannot be sure that Athens, Argos, Corinth and Sparta were the only Greek states that would welcome the *Catalogue of Ships* in its current form. Indeed, presuming that meeting the interests of a large number of Greek states would constitute the safest guarantee of the adoption of the revised version, it seems reasonable to suggest that the revisions in question were not confined to these four states. Accordingly, additional anachronisms and inexplicable gaps in the map of the *Catalogue* may well be due to other instances of this kind of editorial activity.

As distinct from this, there are no serious grounds for suspecting 'Hesiod's' version to have been fabricated in someone's political interest. Though this version obviously supports the claim of the Megarians that Ajax was originally described as possessing the territory of the Megarid, Megarian responsibility for the Hesiodic version is out of the question for the simple reason that the Megarians had a version of their own for Ajax's entry in the *Catalogue of Ships*, but, except for the formula Αἶας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος, this version has nothing in common with that adduced in 'Hesiod'.⁴⁹ On the other hand, though Greek literary tradition ascribes to Pisistratus the deletion of a line unfavourable to Theseus in the Hesiodic corpus, Ajax's entry in the *Catalogue of Women* is too much at variance with the Athenian interest to be considered to have undergone an Athenian influence.⁵⁰ Generally speaking, it is very unlikely that anyone would take a historically sound picture of the northeastern Peloponnese such as that presented in Homer and transform it into a bizarre Salaminian empire which could hardly have any support in the experience of sixth-century Greeks.⁵¹ This is not to say, however, that 'Hesiod's' picture of Ajax's domain is in itself geographically or mythologically unreasonable: after all, Salamis, Aegina, the Epidaurian peninsula and the Isthmus do constitute a territorial continuity, and there is also evidence allowing

49 Strab. 9.1.10, p. 394 Αἶας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν νέας ἔκ τε Πολίχνης / ἔκ τ' Αἰγειρούσης Νισαίης τε Τριπόδων τε.

50 The line in question, relating to Theseus' abandoning Ariadne, seems to be a quotation from the *Aegimius*, see [Hes.] fr. 298 M-W. Since Plut. *Thes.* 20, where the line is quoted, is our only source on the Athenian 'recension' of Hesiod, Merkelbach 1952, 41–42 n. 55 is very cautious in admitting the possibility that not only the Homeric but also the Hesiodic poems have undergone such 'recension'.

51 The Calaurian League, united around the cult of Poseidon on the island Calauria in the Saronic Gulf (in historic times belonging to Troezen), is an example of a similar conglomeration. The members of this ancient Amphictiony, originating either in the Bronze or, more probably, the Early Iron Age (see Snodgrass 1982, 670), were Orchomenus, Athens, Aegina, Epidaurus, Nauplia, Hermione, and Prasiae, see Strab. 8.6.14, p. 374. Argos became a member of the Calaurian League only in the early sixth century, having occupied the place of Nauplia.

one to link Ajax and his family with the territories in question.⁵² But if a Salaminian empire similar to that described in 'Hesiod' did in fact exist, it is unfamiliar to us. Surely, 'being unfamiliar' can hardly be seen as a serious disadvantage in what is supposed to be a reproduction of the political map of Greece at the time of the Trojan War.

52 Aegina is the homeland of Ajax's father Telamon; Ajax's mother Periboea (or Eriboea) was the daughter of the Megarian king Alcathoos, see Xen. *Cyn.* 1.9, Paus. 1.42.4. The cult of Ajax is attested for Megara, the cult of Telamon for Aegina.

26 The *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the Problem of Multiformity in Oral and Written Tradition

Introduction

It is mainly owing to the ‘evolutionary model of the genesis of epic’, recently proposed by Gregory Nagy, that the problem of multiformity in traditional poetry, and more specifically, in the poetry of Homer, has become a hotly debated topic in contemporary Homeric studies. According to Nagy’s thesis, up to the middle of the second century BCE, till the completion of Aristarchus’ editorial work on the Homeric text, this text was undergoing a so-called crystallization process: it gradually evolved from a state of relative fluidity to one of relative rigidity, and it continued to preserve a certain degree of multiformity at each stage of this development, that is, even after it had been first fixed in writing. On this interpretation, the tradition of oral performance of Homer continued to influence the written text of the Homeric poems, so that ‘the variants of Homeric textual tradition reflect for the most part the multiforms of a performance tradition’. This is why Nagy advocates abandoning ‘the elusive certainty of finding the original composition of Homer’; the ultimate goal of his proposed approach is the ambitious project of ‘a multitext edition of Homer’.¹

On the face of it, the thesis that, even after being fixed in writing, the Homeric poems continued to be orally performed conforms with the well-known fact of rhapsodic performances of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the current view, the rhapsodes, as distinct from the *oidoi*, oral poets in the full sense of the word, specialized in reproducing as closely as possible the standard, that is, written, version of the Homeric poems. However, Nagy resists the notion of distinguishing the rhapsodes and the *oidoi* in terms of creativity. In his view, at each performance of the Homeric poems a rhapsode produced a new version of Homer; these new versions influenced the text of the Homeric poems, presumably whenever this text was edited, or even copied anew. This is why, says Nagy, although the rhapsodic performances did involve a gradual slowing down of variability, the Homeric text continued to function as a multiform even after its fixation in writing.

Clearly, what is at issue here is the status of the Homeric poems as we have them. If Nagy’s argument concerning the Homeric poems as multiforms is correct,

¹ Nagy 1996b, 151–52, 109. See also 1996a, 103–104. The ‘evolutionary model’ was first fully formulated in Nagy 1992.

then, contrary to what we have become accustomed to believe, no single standard text of Homer ever existed, and the text we have is only one of the numerous variants of these poems that circulated in the ancient world.²

Nagy's thesis has been criticized by several scholars, most notably by Stephanie West, Barry Powell, and Hayden Pelliccia, all of whom have pointed out that the degree of variation in the Homeric text is insufficient for defining it as a multiform. Thus, while acknowledging that 'multiformity is central to the whole of Nagy's discussion', S. West wrote: 'There is, I think, in Nagy's discussion some equivocation between Greek oral heroic epic in general and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in particular; the latter must already in the mid-sixth-century have existed as readily identified works ... to be marked out for regular (and regulated) performance at the Panathenaea'. In Powell's opinion, 'from the moment that the Homeric poems were written down, they existed as texts and were subject to the vicissitudes of any text created in any fashion. Here is a cardinal element of the Parry-Lord thesis: oral poetry composed in performance is always something new, and there is no fixed text; but a written text is a fixed text. A written text is no longer oral poetry, or subject to the rules that govern the generation of oral poetry, although it began as such'. Finally, according to Pelliccia, 'The major problem for Nagy's new theory is simply that the variant recordings that we know of from papyri and the indirect sources ... are for the most part too boring and insignificant to imply that they derived from a truly creative performance tradition ... [W]e are still left wondering if the banal repetitions and expansions that we find in various papyrus scraps really require us to accept, in order to explain them, a full-blown oral performance tradition'.³

The problem, however, is that by multiformity in oral tradition Nagy and his critics seem to understand different things. In what follows, I shall first try to assess the phenomenon of multiformity as such, and only then go on to examine the idea of the Homeric poems as multiforms.

² Even if Nagy is correct in arguing that Aristarchus did succeed in producing such a standard text, this argument can hardly affect the status of our vulgate: although the latter could well have been influenced by Alexandrian editions of Homer, it nevertheless cannot be regarded as directly deriving from one of these editions, including that of Aristarchus. See further Haslam 1997, 84–87 (with bibliography). See also below, ch. 29.

³ S. West in *TLS* (2 August 1996) 27; Powell in *BMCR* 97.3.21 (for Nagy's reply see *BMCR* 97.4.18); Pelliccia in *NYRB* 20 (November 1997) 46.

1

The issue of multiformity in traditional oral poetry was first introduced by Albert B. Lord, Nagy's teacher at Harvard, in Chapter 5 of *The Singer of Tales*.⁴ Lord proceeds from emphasizing those elements in the oral poem that remain stable at every performance of a given traditional subject:

When the singer of tales, equipped with a store of formulas and themes and a technique of composition, takes his place before an audience and tells his story, he follows the plan which he has learned along with the other elements of his profession ... the singer thinks of his song in terms of a flexible plan of themes, some of which are essential and some of which are not. ... To the singer the song, which cannot be changed (since to change it would, in his mind, be to tell an untrue story or to falsify history), is the essence of the story itself. *His idea of stability, to which he is deeply devoted, does not include the wording, which to him has never been fixed, nor the unessential parts of the story.* He builds his performance, or song in our sense, on the stable skeleton of narrative, which is the song in his sense.

It is against this background that Lord's definition of multiformity should be read. It runs as follows:

Our real difficulty arises from the fact that, unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity. We find it difficult to grasp something that is multiform. It seems to us necessary to construct an ideal text or to seek an original, and we remain dissatisfied with an ever changing phenomenon. I believe that once we know the facts of oral composition we must cease trying to find an original of any traditional song ... The truth of the matter is that our concept of 'the original', or 'the song', simply makes no sense in oral tradition.

Again, following Lord's concept of multiformity, while the essence of the story remains the same in all its versions, its wording and unessential parts are variable. Applying this principle to the Greek epics would mean that, although the cause of the Trojan War will always be Helen and not any other woman, Hector will be slain by Achilles and not vice versa, and Agamemnon will be assassinated at the moment of his return home, the poet was nevertheless free to introduce additional details that would fit the main outlines of the saga or to elaborate on its basic 'facts' without at the same time interfering with the essentials.⁵ Or, as J.M. Foley wrote when formulating his assessment of Lord's contribution: 'Lord illustrates the fairly conservative structure of the oral epic song and its fluid parts; even from the same singer, stability from one performance to the next is likely to

⁴ Lord 1960: the passages quoted are from pp. 99–101 (my italics).

⁵ Cf. Finkelberg 1998, 68–73, 151–60. See also above, ch. 12.

lie not at the word-for-word level of the text, but at the levels of theme and story pattern.’⁶

It follows, then, that an oral poem is rigid and fluid at one and the same time. It is rigid in its essentials and fluid in the unessential parts of the story. And of course it would always be fluid in wording. It is important to emphasize in this connection that, as Lord has showed, the lack of consciousness as regards the single word as a unit of speech is one of the characteristic features of oral poetries and probably of oral societies in general:

The singers themselves ... do not think in terms of form as we think of it ... Man without writing thinks in terms of sound groups and not in words, and the two do not necessarily coincide. When asked what a word is, he will reply that he does not know, or he will give a sound group which may vary in length from what we call a word to an entire line of poetry, or even an entire song.⁷

Even when claiming that he has repeated his own or another singer’s song ‘word for word’, the oral poet, without even being conscious of this, is never able to be exact in following his prototype. He repeats it ‘point by point’ rather than ‘word by word’. This clearly indicates that he analyzes his song in units of narrative rather than in verbal units such as words.⁸

It would be wrong, therefore, to treat the oral poem as, to use the expression coined by Adam Parry, ‘a Protean thing’, if by ‘Protean’ one means that the poem changes its identity at every new performance.⁹ Rather, each new performance would present a new variation on the same easily identified theme. But even so it would be fluid enough as compared with the written text. This is not to say of course that the written transmission preserves the text as entirely fixed and unchangeable: interpolations, corrections, omissions, alternative wordings, and so forth, are well-known characteristics of this form of transmission. But this is another kind of changeability, amply exemplified, for example, in medieval manuscript transmission and having nothing to do with the multiformality characteristic of oral tradition. The causes and effects of these two phenomena are entirely different, and they cannot be accounted for along the same lines.

Now consider the following. As pointed out by Reinhold Merkelbach as early as 1952, when compared with the high degree of variation characteristic of other epics, such as, for example, the *Chanson de Roland*, the Homeric poems show an

⁶ Foley 1988, 43.

⁷ Lord 1960, 25.

⁸ Cf. Finkelberg 1998, 123–29.

⁹ A. Parry 1966, 182.

extremely high degree of textual stability; in Merkelbach's view, this shows that a normative text of Homer already existed at a very early stage.¹⁰ In a similar vein, S. West argues that, in view of the fact that the variants attested in the Homeric papyri are relatively few and for the most part trivial, the hallmark characteristic of the Homeric text is its essential uniformity. 'This strongly suggests', she writes, 'that something was done to standardize the text and inhibit the proliferation of variants'.¹¹ According to Richard Janko,

All our sources basically agree over matters of dialect, plot, episodes and so forth; other oral epics recorded in writing have a far wider range of textual variation, e.g. the *Nibelungenlied*, *Chanson de Roland*, *Mahabharata* or *Digenes Akrites*. All of our MSS somehow go back to a single origin, and have passed through a single channel; it is improbable that more than one 'original' of the *Iliad* ever existed, even if different rhapsodic performances and editorial interventions have led to the addition or (rarely) omission of verses here and there. This basic fixity needs to be explained.¹²

Finally, Michael Haslam, proceeding from Janko's linguistic analysis of early hexametric poetry, argues that in so far as one assumes that the Homeric poems' linguistic evolution was arrested at a very early point, this should be taken as proof of an early textual fixation of these poems:

It is impossible to explain this arrest except in terms of the fixity provided by writing. We are free to postulate rhapsodic performance of a memorized text, but unless this was controlled by an invariant, i.e. a written text, some linguistic development would have been inevitable. If there is one thing that research into oral traditions has shown, it is that they are inherently labile: change, however imperceptible to performers and audience, does not stop. Yet it did stop, prior to Hesiod: this can only be due to writing.¹³

Although Merkelbach and S. West associate the standardization of the Homeric text with the tradition of the so-called Pisistratean recension, that is, the codification of the text of the Homeric poems in sixth-century Athens, while Powell, Janko and Haslam place this standardization much earlier, in eighth-century Ionia, this does not change the basic fact that all these scholars share the contention that one standard text of Homer existed from quite early in antiquity. Note now that, whereas comparative evidence from other epic traditions fully corresponds to Lord's definition of multiformity in oral poetry, the extent of variation attested for the text of Homer is insufficient to meet this definition. As Martin

¹⁰ Merkelbach 1952, 34–35.

¹¹ S. West 1988, 36.

¹² Janko 1992, 29.

¹³ Haslam 1997, 80–81. Cf. Janko 1982.

West has pointed out only recently, the so-called ‘wild variants’ of Homer as attested in the earlier Ptolemaic papyri and quotations by the Attic authors diverge from the medieval vulgate ‘not in narrative substance but with substitution of formulae, inorganic additional lines, and so forth’.¹⁴ Now if the Homeric poems were indeed multiformal in the sense given to this term by Lord, it would be reasonable to expect some degree of variation also in details of the plot, that is, in what Lord defined as the unessential parts of the story. However, this is not the case. Note again that it is precisely the absence of this kind of variation that Merkelbach emphasized when comparing the Homeric poems with the *Chanson de Roland*.

It follows, then, that while the scholars who deny that the Homeric poems should be treated as multiformal proceed from Lord’s criterion of multiformality, which allows for fluidity both in the unessential parts of the story and in its wording, for Nagy himself the fluidity in wording alone is sufficient to classify a given poem as a multiformal. Of course, the question here is not whether it is Lord’s or Nagy’s idea of multiformality that is more appropriate. In that it agrees with the comparative evidence supplied by other traditional epics but disagrees with the evidence of Homer, Lord’s definition of multiformality as fluidity in both wording and elements of narrative does not allow us to subsume Homer under the same category as the other epic traditions. As distinct from this, Nagy’s idea of multiformality as fluidity in wording alone is not subject to this limitation. What is at issue here is, therefore, the question as to the position of our text of Homer as against other traditional poetry.

The problem, however, is that, as distinct from the medieval and the Southslavic epics, we have no clear idea of the degree of variation allowed in Greek epic tradition. All our evidence relating to this issue is comparative. Obviously, as long as we have no criterion by which to judge the standard of multiformality accepted in the tradition to which Homer belonged, there can be no clear-cut answer to the question whether even what may seem trivial variations in wording would suffice to define the Homeric epics as genuine multiformal. The following comparison of the *Iliad* and the *Cypria* is a preliminary attempt to fill this gap.

¹⁴ M. West. 1998, 95. As far as I can see, West’s suggestion that the source of most of the ‘wild variants’ is the intimate acquaintance of those who produced them with the text of Homer has much to recommend itself. See *ibid.*, 98: ‘He [the copyist] was not transcribing an unfamiliar or a sacrosanct text word by word. He was producing a new exemplar of a poem that he had running in his head. Perhaps he was writing whole stretches of it out from memory, introducing echoes of similar passages elsewhere, whether unconsciously or because he thought it would be just as good so’. Cf. also Haslam 1997, 69, 77 and above, ch. 9, 101.

2

In Book 2 of his *History* Herodotus argues that insofar as it is said in the *Iliad* that on their way from Sparta to Troy Paris and Helen spent some time in Sidon, Homer could not have been the author of the *Cypria* for the simple reason that the latter gives a different version of this episode:

It is said in the *Cypria* that Alexander came with Helen to Ilium from Sparta in three days, enjoying a favorable wind and a calm sea. (Hdt. 2.117; my translation).¹⁵

Compare this with Proclus' account of the same episode, which he also relates to the *Cypria*:

Helen and Alexander ... put very great treasures on board and sail away by night. Hera stirs up a storm against them and they are carried to Sidon, where Alexander takes the city. From there he sailed to Troy and celebrated his marriage with Helen. (transl. H.G. Evelyn-White)¹⁶

This version agrees with that of Apollodorus, although Apollodorus does not specify his source (*Epit.* 3.4):

But Hera sent them [sc. Alexander and Helen] a heavy storm which forced them to put in at Sidon. And fearing lest he should be pursued, Alexander spent much time in Phoenicia and Cyprus. But when he thought that all chance of pursuit was over, he came to Troy with Helen. (transl. J.G. Frazer)

In each of the versions adduced, Helen and Paris leave Sparta and arrive in Troy. However, while in Herodotus' version they go to Troy directly, reaching it 'in three days', the version used by Proclus and Apollodorus describes their long sojourn in the Levant. Both Herodotus and Proclus refer explicitly to the *Cypria* as their source. This can only mean that the *Cypria* addressed by Herodotus and the *Cypria* addressed by Proclus were in fact two different poems.¹⁷

Let us take some additional examples. While describing the likeness of Palamedes found among Polygnotus' paintings in the Lesche in Delphi, Pausanias makes the following remark:

¹⁵ Cf. *Il.* 6.289–90, with the scholia; for the discussion see, e.g., Davies 1989, 41; Bernabé 1987, 52–53; Burgess 1996, 81 and n. 20.

¹⁶ Allen 1912, 103.4–12 [= *Cypr.* arg. 2 West].

¹⁷ Cf. Frazer's ([1921] 174 n. 2) commentary on Apollod. *Epit.* 3.4: 'It seems therefore that Herodotus and Proclus had different texts of the *Cypria* before them'.

Palamedes was drowned out fishing, and I know from reading the epic of the *Cypria* that it was Diomedes and Odysseus who killed him. (10.31.2; transl. P. Levi)

While Pausanias' version concurs with the one told by Dictys of Crete, Proclus' account of the *Cypria* sums up the subject of the death of Palamedes in a brief sentence that does not allow either proof or disproof.¹⁸ Apollodorus, however, has the following (*Epit.* 3.8):

Having taken a Phrygian prisoner, Odysseus compelled him to write a letter of treasonable purport ostensibly sent by Priam to Palamedes; and having buried gold in the quarters of Palamedes, he dropped the letter in the camp. Agamemnon read the letter, found the gold, and delivered up Palamedes to the allies to be stoned as a traitor.

The prominent role that the art of writing plays in this episode makes it unlikely that Apollodorus' version of the death of Palamedes could be the original one. Note, however, that, judging by the fact that it was already taken for granted in Gorgias' *Defence of Palamedes*, this version must have been at least as early as the fifth century BCE.¹⁹

According to Proclus' account of the *Cypria*, the sequence of the events relating to the first stages of the Trojan campaign was as follows:

Then the Greeks tried to land at Ilium, but the Trojans prevent them, and Protesilaus is killed by Hector. Achilles then kills Cynus, the son of Poseidon, and drives the Trojans back. The Greeks take up their dead and send envoys to the Trojans demanding the surrender of Helen and the treasure with her. The Trojans refusing, they first assault the city etc.²⁰

Three episodes can be discerned in this account: (1) the death of Protesilaus; (2) Achilles' victory over Cynus and the subsequent burial of the dead; (3) negotiations with the Trojans concerning the restoration of Helen and the treasure.

Compare this to the account of the same events found in Apollodorus' *Library* (*Epit.* 3.28–31):

Putting to sea from Tenedos, they approached Troy, and sent Odysseus and Menelaus to demand the restoration of Helen and the property. But the Trojans, having summoned the assembly, not only refused to restore Helen, but threatened to kill the envoys. These were, however, saved by Antenor; but the Greeks, exasperated at the insolence of the barbarians,

¹⁸ Allen 1912, 105.15–16 (= *Cypr.* arg. 12 West) ἔπειτ' ἔστι Παλαμήδους θάνατος, 'and then comes the death of Palamedes'. Cf. Dictys Cretensis *Bellum Troianum* 2.15.

¹⁹ Gorgias B11a DK; the same version is probably alluded to in Eur. *Or.* 432, with scholia. See also Hyg. *Fab.* 05.

²⁰ Allen 1912, 104.24–105.6 (= *Cypr.* arg. 10 West). See further above, ch. 14.

stood to arms and made sail against them. ... Of the Greeks the first to land from his ship was Protesilaus, and having slain not a few of the barbarians, he fell by the hand of Hector. ... On the death of Protesilaus, Achilles landed with the Myrmidons, and throwing a stone at the head of Cynus, killed him. When the barbarians saw him dead, they fled to the city, and the Greeks, leaping from their ships, filled the plain with bodies. And having shut up the Trojans, they besieged them; and they drew up the ships.

Comparison of Apollodorus' account with that of Proclus shows that although the episodes they adduce are the same, the order in which they emerge is different: in Apollodorus, the embassy precedes the landing whereas in Proclus it follows it. This seems to indicate again that, though Proclus and Apollodorus used the same version of Paris' journey from Sparta to Troy, Apollodorus' source as regards the initial stages of the Trojan campaign was not identical to the *Cypria* that Proclus had.

Thus, we can discern several different versions of such episodes concerning the initial stages of the Trojan War as Helen's elopement with Paris, the Achaeans' landing in the Troad, and the death of Palamedes. On the whole, the tradition relating to the beginning of the Trojan War seems to have displayed considerable fluctuation in such details as the name of Protesilaus' slayer,²¹ the name of his wife,²² the manner of Cynus' death,²³ and probably many others. At the same time, the cluster of subjects 'The Elopement of Helen', 'The Death of Protesilaus', 'The Duel of Achilles and Cynus, or the Landing', 'The Negotiations about Helen', and 'The Death of Palamedes' is common to all the variants, including those that treat the beginning of the Trojan War only incidentally. That is to say, in Greek tradition about the beginning of the Trojan War the subjects in question belonged to what Lord called 'the stable skeleton of narrative'.

As far as we know, the only traditional source that treated the beginning of the Trojan War was the *Cypria*. This seems to indicate that all the variants mentioned above, including those that do not detail their source, ultimately stem from different versions of this poem. Or should we rather say, in the vein of Nagy's approach, that there were several *Cypria* or, for that matter, several *Iliades parvae*

²¹ Hector, Aeneas, Achates, and Euphorbus are among the candidates. See Eust. on *Il.* 2.701 and *Od.* 11.521. See also ch. 14, 141–42.

²² The name Apollodorus gives Protesilaus' wife, Laodamia, consistent as it is with the common tradition, is at variance with Pausanias' evidence that in the *Cypria* the woman's name was Polydora. See Apollod. *Epit.* 3. 30; Paus. 4.2.7 = *Cypr.* fr. 17 Allen (= fr. 22 West).

²³ According to Ovid *Met.* 12.82–145, Cynus was invulnerable to metal (cf. also Arist. *Rhet.* 1396b16–18), and Achilles killed him by strangling him with the thongs of his own helmet. Proclus' account of the *Cypria* does not detail the circumstances of Cynus' death, but Apollodorus has Achilles kill Cynus by throwing a stone at his head.

or *Iliou perseis*, none of them more authoritative than another?²⁴ However that may be, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the tradition dealing with the first stages of the Trojan War fits in perfectly with Lord's definition of multiformity: while the general framework of the story about the beginning of the war remains the same, the details are subject to quite substantial fluctuation. This seems to indicate that, as far at least as variability is concerned, the Greek tradition does not differ from other heroic traditions: it is no more rigid than the medieval or Southslavic tradition and its variability cannot be reduced to the wording alone.

But the case of the *Iliad* does prove to be different. Although references to the events of the Trojan War dealt with in the *Iliad* are much more numerous than those relating to the events of the *Cypria*, no fluctuations in the names of the characters or in the order of the episodes like those observed above have ever been attested for the *Iliad* subjects.²⁵ This seems to indicate that while the *Cypria* (and, by implication, the other poems of the Epic Cycle) functioned as one multiform traditional poem among many, the status of the *Iliad* (and, by implication, the *Odyssey*) was different.

Let us suppose now that this difference was due to the fact that whereas the text of the *Iliad* and that of the *Odyssey* had been fixed in writing at a very early stage, the *Cypria* and the other Cycle epics continued to function as oral poems in the proper sense of the word. If correct, this supposition would give us a clear-cut distinction between the written and therefore a uniform text and the oral and therefore a multiform one. However, the actual situation seems to have been much more complicated. As a matter of fact, there is no sufficient reason to suppose that all those who directly quoted the text of the *Cypria* or adduced various episodes from this poem were referring to oral performances of the poem in question. After all, we know for certain that the *Cypria* that Proclus had in mind contained eleven books, and Pausanias, for one, explicitly says that he learnt about the circumstances of Palamedes' death (which, as we saw, are not identical to what Apollodorus and others tell of the same episode) from reading the *Cypria*.²⁶ That is to say, the difference between the *Iliad* and the *Cypria* as we have them is

²⁴ Cf. Burgess 1996, 90 n. 51: 'For example, Bernabé collects fragments and testimonia under the heading "*Iliades parvae*" on the theory that there were different poems using this title'. Note that this kind of approach renders irrelevant the old controversy whether the *Cypriaca* is a variation of the *Cypria* title or an entirely different poem. On the *Cypria/Cypriaca* controversy see, e.g., Bethe 1966, 18; Bernabé 1987, 38; Burgess, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ As Lowenstam 1997 has shown, the evidence of the vase paintings strongly suggests that up to the sixth or even the fifth century BCE, such fluctuation did occur. See also below, ch. 31.

²⁶ Paus. 10.31.2 (ἐπιλεξάμενος ἐν ἔπεσιν οἶδα τοῖς Κυπρίοις).

not that between a written and an oral text but, rather, that between a written uniform and a written multiform text.

It follows, then, that while Nagy is right in concluding that the fixation of oral poems in writing does not necessarily affect their multiform character or produce a variant that is more authoritative than the others, his conclusion fits the Cycle epics rather than the poems of Homer. Obviously, some additional factor, and not just their fixation in writing, was responsible for the remarkable uniformity of the Homeric poems. This must have been a factor that was not present in the case of the *Cypria* and the other poems of the Epic Cycle. As far as I can see, the canonization of the Homeric poems that resulted from their public recitation at the Panathenaia supplies us with the factor in question. Indeed, while there is a difference of opinion about whether a written text of Homer existed even before this event (see section 1 above), most scholars agree that in the sixth century BCE the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* became codified in Pisistratean Athens in order to be recited at the newly established Panathenaic festival and that it was this codification that acted as a powerful unifying factor in their subsequent history. As Stephen Lowenstam put it, ‘the traditional eighth- or seventh-century dating may be correct, but for whatever reasons—illiteracy, difficulty of transcribing the poems, lack of opportunity to perform the canonical version until the revised Panathenaea—it took a protracted period of time for our versions of the poems to become authoritative’.²⁷

Of course, it is hard to say what canonization of a text not considered sacred in the strict sense of the word would mean in terms of fluidity. Perhaps another example touching upon the relationship between the *Cypria* and the *Iliad* may throw some additional light on the processes involved. While the Homeric Catalogue of Ships remarks in passing that Protesilaus, the first Achaeans to lose his life at Troy, had been killed by an unidentified ‘Dardanian man’, the *Cypria*, which relates the episode in full, explicitly mentions Hector as responsible for Protesilaus’ death.²⁸ Characteristically, it was the *Cypria* version rather than that of the *Iliad* that became predominant in the later tradition. Note indeed that, although we saw that there was more than one version of the name of Protesilaus’ slayer, Hector is mentioned not only by Proclus but also by Apollodorus, in scholia on Lycophron, in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and, by implication, in the *Heroides*.²⁹ This was obviously the reason why Demetrius of Scepsis emended the Homeric

²⁷ Lowenstam 1997, 63; see also below, ch. 31.

²⁸ *Il.* 2.701; Allen 1912, 105.1 [= *Cypr.* arg. 10 West].

²⁹ Apollod. *Epit.* 3.30; schol. on Lycophr. 245; Ov. *Met.* 12.67–68; *Her.* 13.65–66 (Laodamia to Protesilaus).

text by changing τὸν δ'ἔκτανε Δάρδανος ἀνὴρ at *Iliad* 2.701 to τὸν δ'ἔκτανε φαίδιμος Ἴκτωρ. In itself a valuable example of how an extra-Homeric and presumably unauthoritative tradition could influence even the text of Homer, this emendation also demonstrates the limits of such influence. Indeed, sensible though it certainly was, neither this emendation nor other significant changes proposed by ancient scholars became part of the vulgate.³⁰ The only variations that entered the Homeric text have been trivial variations in wording.

It can be supposed, therefore, that although it is not out of the question that slightly different versions of the Homeric text did exist, these were not authoritative enough to affect what was considered by all as the canonical text, and they eventually died out. If we take into account, first, that the Panathenaic festival, at which the text of the Homeric poems was regularly recited, was among the central events of the public life of Athens and the whole of Greece, and, second, that it was this same text that was memorized at schools all over the Greek world, this can give us at least an approximate parameter for appreciating the special status that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* enjoyed in the ancient world.³¹ Obviously, no such conditions existed in the case of the Cycle epics. The subsequent history of the Homeric epics on the one hand and the Cycle epics on the other points in the same direction. A handful of fragments and a brief summary of the contents excerpted from the *Chrestomathy* of Proclus is all that has remained of the Cycle poems. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which had become canonical texts to be learnt at schools even during the Byzantine period, survived.

Note now that, although we saw that the poems of the Epic Cycle can consistently be described as multiforms in Lord's sense, they supply no evidence about the processes of gradual crystallization as suggested by Nagy. Indeed, despite the fact that we have the unique opportunity of following various versions of the *Cypria* through the period of one thousand years, from Herodotus in the fifth century BCE to Proclus in the fifth century CE, no movement from fluidity to rigidity like that postulated by Nagy can be observed in the case of this poem. Just as the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Nibelungenlied*, and other epics that circulated in the Middle Ages, the *Cypria* circulated in several written versions even quite late in antiquity. Each version delivered the story of the beginning of the Trojan War in a somewhat different way. In other words, the written transmission of the Cycle

³⁰ According to S. West (n. 3 above), Zenodotus' alternative reading of *Od.* I. 93 and 285, according to which Athena sends Telemachus to Crete rather than to Sparta where he actually arrives in our *Odyssey*, is 'what many would regard as the most disconcertingly suggestive of all ancient Homeric variants'. See also S. West 1988, 43.

³¹ For further discussion see chs. 27 and 30.

epics displays the same multiformity at all stages of their existence, thus reflecting in the written form the multiformity of the oral tradition. But there has always been only one version of the *Iliad*. This can only indicate that at some early stage the history of the Homeric text became not simply a history of a written text, but a history of a written text that was also considered canonical in the civilization to which it belonged. In that, its status was closer to the status of the Bible than to that of the *Chanson de Roland* or the *Nibelungenlied*.³² We should continue, then, to speak of this text in terms of emendations, interpolations, scribal errors, and other phenomena that are characteristic of manuscript transmission.³³

³² It is worth mentioning in this connection that in both the case of the Hebrew Bible and that of the New Testament, a very rich apocryphal literature exists that did not become part of the canonical list of 'inspired' texts. For an analogy between the Homeric tradition and the tradition of the Hebrew Bible, see now M. West 1998a, 102.

³³ An earlier version of this paper was read at the conference 'Epos and Logos: Ancient Literature and Its Oral Context', held at the Victoria University of Wellington in July 1998. I am grateful to the fellow participants for their helpful comments and discussion.

27 Homer as a Foundation Text

The Greek heroic tradition once embraced a much wider range of epic poems than merely the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with which it eventually became associated. Side by side with the Trojan Cycle, to which the Homeric poems belong, additional heroic subjects were treated in epic cycles such as the Argonautic saga, the Theban Cycle, and others, some of them also attributed to Homer. At an early stage, all the traditional poems dealing with the events of the Trojan War were assumed to be authored by Homer; later, only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* came to be seen as genuinely ‘Homeric’, whereas the other Trojan epics were attributed to other poets and subsumed under the so-called Epic Cycle. A handful of fragments and a brief summary of the contents excerpted from the *Chrestomathy* of Proclus (either the 2nd or the 5th c. CE) is all that has remained of the Cycle poems, and even less than that of other epics. Only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* survived transmission, eventually to form part of the so-called ‘Western Canon’. While it is pretty obvious that this outcome has much to do with the privileged status that the Homeric poems enjoyed in ancient Greece, it is much less obvious how they acquired this status. In what follows, I will argue that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were intended to supersede the other traditional epics from the very beginning and that they achieved this goal by means of a thorough revision of the heroic tradition and its deliberate adaptation to the new self-image of Greek civilization that emerged in the early archaic period.

1 Reshaping the Tradition

It is generally recognized today that both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* lean heavily upon the nomenclature of Trojan subjects dealt with in the poems of the Cycle.¹ Take for example Books 2–7 of the *Iliad*, which form a digression from the narrative succession of the story of the Wrath of Achilles.² Quite a few episodes in these books are connected with the beginning of the Trojan War, which was the subject of the Cyclic *Cypria*. Odysseus’ account of the mustering of the troops at Aulis and the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2; the Teichoscopia, the duel of Paris and Menelaus and the Helen-Paris encounter in *Iliad* 3; Agamemnon’s inspection of the troops in *Iliad* 4; the Trojan scenes in *Iliad* 6; the negotiations about the return of Helen

¹ The growing recognition of this fact has been one of the major achievements of the Neoanalytic trend in Homeric scholarship. On Neoanalysis see above, ch. 16 and ch. 18, 188–89.

² See also Finkelberg 1998, 141–50.

and the building of the Achaean Wall in *Iliad* 7—each of these offers a retrospective of an initial stage of the war. The beginning of the war may be evoked in a direct reminiscence, as in Odysseus' reminiscence of the Aulis episode in *Iliad* 2 or Antenor's reminiscence of the embassy of Odysseus and Menelaus to Troy in *Iliad* 3, both told in the *Cypria*.³ But more often than not the *Iliad* adopts a subtler strategy, in that the episodes properly belonging to the beginning of the war are incorporated into the chronological and narrative setting of its last year. Thus, the seduction of Helen by Paris and Aphrodite in *Iliad* 3 provides, as was aptly put by Mark Edwards, 'a reenactment of the original seduction', the proper context of which is again the *Cypria*.⁴ In a similar way, the mustering of the troops described in *Iliad* 2 or the negotiations about Helen and the building of the Achaean Wall described in *Iliad* 7, properly belonging to the beginning of the war but introduced so as to suit the context of the last year, can hardly be anything else than such 're-enactments' of the war's initial stages, again closely parallel to the *Cypria* account.

What the *Iliad* does for the Trojan War as such, the *Odyssey* does for the Fall of Troy and the Returns: the former was the subject of the Cyclic *Aethiopis*, *Ilias parva* and *Iliou persis* whereas the latter was treated in the Cyclic *Nostoi*. Numerous episodes from these poems are retold or alluded to in the *Odyssey*.⁵ As a result, besides being a poem of the return of the last of the heroes, the *Odyssey* also acts as a large-scale compendium of the part of the Epic Cycle dealing with the final stages of the Trojan War and the fate of the survivors.

The above seems to indicate that, although they begin *in medias res* and describe two single episodes of the Trojan saga, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* also function as symbolic compendia of the entire history of the Trojan War and the Returns. While the literary merits of this compositional technique were commended as early as Aristotle,⁶ it has rarely been taken into account that what is being dealt with is far from purely a matter of composition. As Laura Slatkin has shown, Homer not only evokes other traditions but also neutralizes them by adapting them to his own agenda: thus, the traditional theme of the immortality conferred on Achilles by Thetis is turned in the *Iliad* into one of 'heroic experience as a metaphor for the condition of mortality, with all its contradictions'.⁷ This strongly suggests that Homer and the Cycle epics cannot be placed on one plane as if they

³ *Il.* 2.284–332; 3.204–24; cf. *Cypr.* arg. 6, 10 West.

⁴ Edwards 1987a, 196; cf. Kullmann 1991, 434.

⁵ For a representative list see above, ch. 17, 170–71.

⁶ *Poet.* 1451a 23–30; 1459a 30–b7.

⁷ Slatkin 1991, 39; See also above, chs. 16 and 17.

were variations on the same theme. By the very fact of reinterpreting the other versions of the Trojan saga, Homer signals their subordinate status as regards his own poems and privileges the version that he offers.

At some point in the Archaic Age, Homer's narrative of the Trojan War acquired the extraordinary status of the only narrative worthy of being told. In the *Odyssey*, where the Trojan War is already viewed as belonging to the heroic past, 'The Doom of the Achaeans and Troy' engages everybody's attention, including that of the gods themselves. The inhabitants of Ithaca, of the Land of the Phaeacians, of the Island of Aeolia, and even Odysseus himself, are eager to listen to songs and stories about the Trojan War (which, in fact, are the only songs and stories they listen to), and this is the very subject that is included in the Sirens' promise of bestowing a knowledge greater than human—a promise nobody can resist. That only a savage like the Cyclops can remain ignorant of the Trojan War, as well as of any mark of human civilization, shows clearly enough that acquaintance with the Trojan saga—and, by implication, with the poems of Homer—was envisaged as a cultural code that united the civilized world.⁸

To sum up, the relationship between Homer and the Trojan tradition is anything but symmetrical. Homer both reshapes the tradition he inherited and adapts it to his own agenda, which as a rule does not concur with that of his sources. This would mean that, rather than offering just another variant of the common tradition, Homer turns earlier traditions about the Trojan War and the Returns into raw material for his poems. That he is nevertheless anxious to show his awareness of his sources indicates that he meant the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not simply to absorb the other traditions but to supersede them, thus claiming for them the unique status of metaepics.⁹ Our next task is to see why this claim became universally accepted.

2 Consolidating the Collective Identity

The political and dialect maps of historic Greece are both the direct outcome of two events that took place at the end of the second—the beginning of the first millennium BCE: the emergence of the Dorians and other northwestern tribes in central Greece and the Peloponnese, and the mass migration of the Mycenaean population to the Aegean shore of Asia Minor and other parts of the Mediterra-

⁸ *Od.* 12.183–93 (the Sirens); 9.258–80 (the Cyclops). Cf. Finkelberg 1998, 195–205.

⁹ See also above, chs. 16 and 17.

nean. Neither of these events makes an appearance worthy of mention in the Homeric poems.¹⁰ This is not to say that they were not addressed in Greek epic tradition as a whole. Thus, it is almost certain that the lost traditional epic *Aegimius*, often ascribed to Hesiod, dealt with the coming of the Dorians, whereas the migration to Asia Minor was certainly treated in the lost epic poem *Melampodia*, also ascribed to Hesiod. And, judging by the evidence of literary sources, the Dorian saga of the 'Return of the Children of Heracles' gave the Dorians' own distinctive version of the population movements that shook Greece at the end of the Bronze Age.¹¹ None of these became part of the mainstream epic tradition, which sees the Trojan War as the main if not the only factor that brought about the end of the Heroic Age. Yet, the very fact that such alternative versions of the end of the Heroic Age did exist strongly suggests that Homer's silence regarding the coming of the Dorians and the subsequent migrations to the East was a matter of deliberate choice.

This is not to say that Homer simply ignored the Dorians. Thus, for example, the Argos of Diomedes is presented in the Catalogue of Ships as spreading over the entire territory of northeastern Peloponnese and the island of Aegina (*Il.* 2.559–567). This picture is boldly anachronistic, in that it corresponds to what were thought to have been the original domains of Dorian Argos, presumably restored under king Pheidon in the seventh century BCE. As a result, the Heroic Age Argos emerges in Homer as if it had already possessed the political and ethnic character that was associated with it in the archaic period.¹² In a similar manner, the Sparta of Menelaus corresponds fairly well to the Dorian Sparta. However, such geographical entities as Argos or Sparta do not properly belong to the Heroic Age. The centres of the relevant territories were Mycenae, Tiryns and Amyclae, all of them abundantly represented in Greek legend. Yet Mycenae, an insignificant town in historic times, is the only one of the three whose treatment is historically consistent, in that it was made the capital of the antiquarian kingdom of Agamemnon. Tiryns and Amyclae, whose function as the administrative and cult centers of pre-Dorian Greece was well known to Greeks of the archaic period, were replaced by more up-to-date Argos and Sparta and, accordingly, marginalized. That is to say, although it was a matter of common knowledge that the Dorians, who were distinguished by their dialect, their division into three tribes (the

10 The only explicit reference to the Dorians is *Od.* 19.177. See further Finkelberg 2005, 140–76, and above, ch. 24.

11 On the Dorian charter myth see esp. Malkin 1994, 33–45.

12 The pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* gives a different and apparently a more consistent picture of the Heroic Age Argos: see above, ch. 25.

Ionians had four), and by their political, social and religious institutions, were post-Mycenaean newcomers into the Peloponnese, their descendants could nevertheless easily locate themselves on the map of heroic Greece that Homer supplied.

This suggests that in drawing his picture of heroic Greece Homer systematically updated the past in such a way that it would fit the present. The most likely motive underlying this updating seems to have been the need to represent the Greece of the Heroic Age as a harmonious Panhellenic whole already possessing the political and ethnic features characteristic of the archaic period. Evidently, this could only be done by ignoring the historic facts of the coming of the Dorians and the mass migration to Asia Minor that it triggered and by marginalizing the alternative traditions that accounted for these events. It is difficult to tell what kind of authority, if any, could have lain behind the strategy of updating the past in accordance with the contemporary agenda that Homer adopted. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that this strategy cannot be separated from large-scale developments which accompanied the rise of the city-state and which are often referred to as ‘the eighth-century Renaissance’.¹³

Let me emphasize again that we have no reason to doubt that Homer and his contemporaries were well aware that the Dorians were not part of the Heroic Age milieu or that the population of historic Greece was distinctly heterogeneous. Yet this awareness did not prevent them from ignoring such facts or moulding them in accordance with their own agenda. As far as I can see, this agenda consisted in answering the need of creating, beyond the differences dividing the heterogeneous population groups that settled in Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, of an overarching identity of ‘Hellenes’—a brand-new self-identification that entered into circulation in the eighth century BCE. By modifying the inherited picture of the heroic past, the new Greek civilization not only acquired the unity it initially lacked but also established a continuity between the Greece of the Heroic Age and historic Greece, in that the former was envisaged as already possessed of the ethnic and political structure characteristic of the latter.

We have seen that Homer marginalized the epic traditions that offered alternative versions of the end of Mycenaean Greece. There is reason to suppose that at some later stage a similar thing happened to the tradition represented in the Cycle epics, which had also once been credited with Homeric authorship.¹⁴ Take for example the theme of the destruction of the Race of Heroes, prominent in the

¹³ Discussed in detail in ch. 24 above.

¹⁴ Cf. Nagy 1990, 72–73. For discussion see, ch. 17 and ch. 18, 193–95.

poems of the Cycle as well as in the Hesiodic tradition. According to both traditions, the Heroic Age came to an end in two great wars, the Theban and the Trojan, which were especially designed by Zeus to put an end to the Race of Heroes. Although Homer was also engaged in perpetuating the glorious memory of the Trojan War, the theme of the end of Heroes is conspicuously absent in his poems. Homer's suppressing of the traditional myth of the destruction of the Race of Heroes was again part of a larger strategy purporting to transform the heroic past into one of the main factors in establishing the self-image of the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE.¹⁵

We can conclude, therefore, that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were intended to supersede the other traditional epics from the very beginning and that they achieved this goal by means of a thorough revision of the heroic tradition and its deliberate adaptation to the new self-image of Greek civilization that emerged in the archaic period. The picture of prehistoric Greece that they promulgated became the standard if not the only account of their past that the later Greeks could envisage.

3 The *Iliad* and the Polis

There is little doubt that the *Iliad* originated in the cultural and political milieu of aristocratic chiefdoms which preceded the formation of the city-state. Contrary to the system of values established with the rise of the polis, according to which the distribution of honour should follow personal achievement, the distribution of honour in pre-city-state society corresponded to a person's social status, which was determined by superiority in birth and wealth. Nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the description of the athletic contests held by Achilles at Patroclus' tomb in *Iliad* 23. In the chariot race, Eumelus who lost the competition is offered the second prize because he is 'the best', *aristos*, and Menelaus who came third is again offered the second prize on exactly the same grounds, while in the throwing of the spear Agamemnon receives the first prize without even participating in the contest, only because he is *aristos* and superior to all others.¹⁶ No wonder, therefore, that the chief motivation behind the Homeric warriors' behaviour was the drive to meet the expectations that ensued from their status. Alongside risking one's life in war, these expectations embraced the assistance to and

¹⁵ See further ch. 15 above.

¹⁶ *Il.* 23.536–8, 586–96, 884–97.

protection of those to whom the person was tied by the mutual obligations of military alliance, guest-friendship, or vassal relations.¹⁷

It is however highly symptomatic that the lack of social equality and insufficient recognition of personal merit which directly result from the aristocratic ethos prevailing in the *Iliad* are questioned in the body of the *Iliad* itself. This can be seen first of all in Homer's treatment of the central issue of the poem, the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. 'I have sacked twelve of men's cities from my ships', Achilles says bitterly in *Iliad* 9, 'and I claim eleven more by land across the fertile Troad. From all of these I took many fine treasures, and every time I brought them all and gave to Agamemnon son of Atreus: and every time, back there by the fast ships he had never left, he would take them in, share out a few, and keep the most for himself.'¹⁸ Homer makes Achilles question the view of honour as bestowed automatically, according to status and birth, and pose the claim of merit as against the claim of rank. 'Stay at home or fight your hardest--your share will be the same. Coward and hero are given equal honour', Achilles says elsewhere in the same speech. It is not surprising, therefore, that in his *Politics* Aristotle adduces these Homeric lines in support of the argument that the distribution of honour must be proportionate to one's contribution to the well-being of the community.¹⁹

But Homer's criticism of aristocratic values goes even further. The main conflict of the *Iliad* is the conflict of honour. It was because of considerations of honour which went against the common interest that Agamemnon took Briseis from Achilles and it was, again, considerations of honour that caused Achilles to withdraw from participation in the Trojan campaign from the moment that his prize of honour, *geras*, was taken from him. The issue of honour is thus woven into the very core of the *Iliad* plot. At the same time, it would be wrong to say that the poet of the *Iliad* sides unambiguously with the considerations of personal honour and prestige which move his heroes and the plot of his poem. As I have argued elsewhere, in his treatment of the theme of Achilles' wrath in *Iliad* 11, 16 and 18 Homer criticizes aristocratic individualism and its self-serving value of personal honour, *timē*, and re-interprets the inherited plot of the *Iliad* in the spirit of the city-state value of *aretē*, personal excellence which benefits the entire community. The way in which Achilles' behaviour is criticized by Nestor in *Iliad* 11, by Patroclus in *Iliad* 16, and above all by Achilles himself in *Iliad* 18 strongly suggests that, by keeping

¹⁷ See Long 1970, 123–26 and ch. 22 above. On the values of Greek aristocracy see esp. Donlan 1999 [1980].

¹⁸ *Il.* 9.328–33. Transl. M. Hammond, slightly adapted.

¹⁹ *Il.* 9.318–19; *Ar. Pol.* 1267a1–2.

his excellence, *aretē*, to himself Achilles has actually invalidated it, thereby having annihilated his own worth as ‘the best of the Achaeans’.²⁰

There can be little doubt that this was not the message with which the poem was originally informed: an aristocratic chieftain is only responsible for his own men and owes nothing to the soldiers led by other chieftains or to the society at large. The clash between the individualistic values of the nobility and the communal values of the city-state produced by this and similar Homeric passages shows that the social perspective adopted in the *Iliad* is a double one. We can suggest, therefore, that at some stage in their history the Homeric poems underwent a thorough re-interpretation which made them relevant to the city-state society. Owing to Homer’s extensive use of direct speech, it became possible to incorporate this re-interpretation into the text of the poems without changing their plots. As a result, like the Bible and some other ancient corpora, Homer’s became a polyphonic text, which carried within itself both the original message and its re-interpretation in the vein of later values.

We have seen that the need to consolidate the heterogeneous populations of historic Greece was the most likely reason why the myth of the Heroic Age as delivered by Homer became the foundational myth of the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece at the beginning of the first millennium BCE. This however was far from the only function that this myth fulfilled. Greek civilization, perhaps for the first time in history, created a civic society whose ideal of man was not identical to that proposed by religion or philosophy. The Greek concept of human excellence, *aretē*, which embodied this ideal, played a central role in the poems of Homer.²¹ No wonder, therefore, that for generations of Greeks the world of Homer became a timeless model against which their own lives were enacted. This is why Plato’s Socrates, for example, found it appropriate to account for his position at his trial by comparing his situation with that of Achilles choosing death over disgrace in *Iliad* 18.²² There was no need for Socrates to embark on a lengthy argument in order to explain why he preferred death to exile. The example of Achilles has brought his message home with an efficacy that no argument could ever equal.

²⁰ *Il.* 11.762–4, 16.29–32, 18.98–106, and above, ch. 22, 260–65.

²¹ On the *Odyssey* version of the same ideal see ch. 20 above; on the city-state value of *aretē* see Finkelberg 2002.

²² *Pl. Ap.* 28cd; quoted above, p. 263.

4 The Bible of the Greeks

The codification of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Athens of the sixth century BCE granted the Athenian state a monopoly over the standard text of Homer. The Homeric poems began to be recited at the prestigious Panathenaic festival, which was among the central events of the public life of the city and of the whole of Greece.²³ They also became the basis of elementary education, to be memorized at schools all over the Greek world.²⁴ This is why the history of the Homeric poems after their fixation in writing is not simply a history of a written text but that of a written text highly privileged in the civilization to which it belonged. In that, its status is closer to the status of the Bible than to that of other works of literature created in ancient Greece.

Needless to say, the Greek world continued to change also after the codification of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The beliefs and values that informed the Homeric poems altered considerably in the course of time. The Homeric religion especially, with its all too human-like and human behaving gods, soon enough began to be felt inadequate by many. Already in the sixth century BCE Xenophanes of Colophon accused Homer and Hesiod of having attributed to the gods ‘everything that is a shame and reproach among men’, and Plato’s attack on Homer in the *Republic* was very much in the same vein. Nevertheless, in the entire history of Homeric reception, Plato seems to have been the only one who approached the Homeric poems in accordance with the principle ‘what they do well we must pass and what not, reject’.²⁵ Another tendency was represented by those who, like Crates of Mallus (2nd century BCE), tried to amend Homer’s text so as to make it fit the scientific horizons of later epochs (more below). The standard, however, was set by Crates’ contemporary Aristarchus of Samothrace, who was mainly pre-occupied with the *numerus versuum*, trying to purge the Homeric poems from meaningless repetitions that had accumulated in the course of time, and was not

23 While some scholars connect the standardization of the Homeric text with the tradition of the so-called Pisistratean recension, that is, the codification of the Homeric poems in sixth-century Athens, others place it much earlier, in eighth-century Ionia. At the same time, all these scholars agree that Athens of the sixth century BCE played a pivotal role in the transmission of the text of Homer: see further below, ch. 31.

24 On Homer’s role in education see also ch. 30, 354–55.

25 *Resp.* 377c1–2 καὶ ὃν μὲν ἂν καλὸν [μῦθον] ποιήσωσιν, ἐγκριτέον, ὃν δ’ ἂν μή, ἀποκριτέον. See also Xenoph. B 11 DK (cf. B 1.19–23); Pl. *Resp.* 607a, 398d–400d and below, ch. 30. According to Janko 1992, 23, it is not out of the question that Zenodotus (3rd century BCE) tried to apply Plato’s principles in his editorial work.

in the habit of deleting Homeric lines on account of their content: when Aristarchus intended to cast doubt on a line or a passage he simply athetized them.²⁶

In the centuries that followed, the tendency to avoid altering the received text of Homer became the dominant one. What was offered instead were various methods of interpretation. That is to say, it is by validating the standard text of the poems rather than by interfering with it that Homer's adaptation to changing circumstances normally proceeded. To borrow the terms introduced by Moshe Halbertal, the 'textual closure' of the Homeric corpus was accompanied by the 'hermeneutical openness' towards it—a sure sign of the canonical status that the text of Homer had acquired.²⁷

As early as the end of the sixth century BCE, Theagenes of Rhegium for the first time applied the method of allegorical interpretation to the Homeric religion. As far as we can judge, Theagenes approached the Battle of Gods, the Theomachy of *Iliad* 20 and 21, in terms of the conflict of physical and cosmic elements. In the fifth century, Metrodorus of Lampsacus interpreted the whole of the *Iliad* in the vein of the cosmological doctrine of the philosopher Anaxagoras.²⁸ The allegorical approach was also favoured by the early Stoics: their chief purpose seems to have been the identification of the gods of Homer and Hesiod with cosmic elements and forces. The Neoplatonist and Neopythagorean allegorization of Homer, which explicitly aimed at defending the poet against Plato's criticisms, began to appear in the first centuries CE and reached its climax in the fifth century, in the work of Proclus.²⁹

Another widespread method of interpretation, closely connected with allegory but not identical with it, was to update Homer by reading into his text the scientific and practical knowledge that accumulated in later epochs, first and foremost after the conquests of Alexander. The Stoics especially were notorious for their attempts to make Homer into an advanced astronomer and geographer. In his readings of Homer, the founder of the Pergamene school and Aristarchus' rival Crates of Mallos ascribed to the Poet the knowledge of a spherical earth and

26 According to Plutarch (*Mor.* 26F), Aristarchus deleted 'out of fear' four lines from Phoenix's speech in *Iliad* 9 (458–61), which described how Phoenix considered killing his father in revenge for the curse put on him. Yet, as S. West 2001 argued, the lines in question, known to us only from Plutarch's quotation, should rather be taken as belonging to one of the Cycle poems. On Aristarchus' editorial activity see also below, ch. 29.

27 Halbertal 1997, 32–40, esp. 32–33: 'Canonizing a text results in increased flexibility in its interpretation, such as the use of complex hermeneutical devices of accommodation to yield the best possible reading'.

28 D-K 8.2; 59 A 1 par. 11. Cf. Richardson 1993, 27–29.

29 See further Lamberton 1992.

universe, of the arctic circle and regions of the Far North, of the Atlantic ocean and the western lands in general, and so on, whereas Strabo tried to adjust the geographical horizons of Augustan Rome to Homer's picture of the world. Strabo's polemics with Eratosthenes and his followers in Book 7 of the *Geography* is a good example of the Stoic exegesis of Homer. Eratosthenes claimed, sensibly enough, that although Homer knew Greece fairly well, he was not acquainted with lands and peoples far away from it. Homer's failure to mention the Scythians served as a conspicuous example of his geographical incompetence. In his defense of Homer, Strabo seeks to rehabilitate the Poet by arguing that the fabulous tribes of Hippemolgi, 'mare-milkers', and Galactophagi, 'curd-eaters', could be none other than the Scythians in poetic disguise.³⁰

Moral and values were perhaps even more difficult to adjust than religion and science. We have seen that at some stage the Homeric poems were brought into correspondence with the values of the city-state, above all the communal value of *aretē*. This guaranteed their relevance to city-state society at least till the time of Aristotle, whose understanding of *aretē* still does not differ essentially from what we find in Homer.³¹ Yet the ethical theories of the Hellenistic Age no longer addressed the traditional city-state society.³² This is why Homer's words 'Zeus increases and diminishes man's *aretē*' (*Il.* 20.242) were found inappropriate by Plutarch, who approached them from the standpoint of the second century CE. In his treatise *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* Plutarch wrote:

Particular attention must be paid to the other words also, when their signification is shifted about and changed by the poets according to various circumstances. An example is the word *aretē*. For inasmuch as *aretē* not only renders men sensible, honest, and upright in actions and words, but also often enough secures for them repute and influence, the poets, following this notion, make good repute and influence to be *aretē*... But when ... in his reading, he finds this line, 'Zeus increases and diminishes man's *aretē*', ... let him consider that the poet has employed *aretē* instead of repute, or influence, or good fortune, or the like.³³

³⁰ Strab. 7.3.6–10, pp. 298–303. On Crates' exegesis see also below, ch. 28.

³¹ See above, ch. 22, 264; cf. ch. 21, 246–50, and Finkelberg 2002.

³² Cf. Bryant 1996, 461: 'The retreat from Polis-citizen ideals ... occurred along all philosophical fronts during the Hellenistic period, as the Cynics, Cyrenaics, Skeptics, Epicureans, and Stoics each sought to distance the well-being of the individual from the collapsing Polis framework and to detach *aretē*, or "virtue", from its former dependence on communal service through performance in the roles of warrior and self-governing citizen'.

³³ *Mor.* 24 CE; transl. F.C. Babbitt.

Plutarch's treatise deserves our special attention also because it reveals some of the actual methods of guiding students towards what was envisaged by their tutors as the appropriate reading of a given Homeric passage. Thus, he suggests that where Homer's moral judgement is not made clear enough, 'a distinction is to be drawn by directing the young man's attention in some such manner as the following':

If, on the one hand, Nausicaa, after merely looking at a strange man, Odysseus, and experiencing Calypso's emotions (*pathos*) toward him, being, as she was, a wanton [child] and at the age for marriage, utters such foolish words to her maid-servants, 'If only such a man as this might come to be called my husband' [*Od.* 6. 244], then are her boldness and lack of restraint to be blamed. But if, on the other hand, she sees into the character of the man from his words, and marvels at his conversation, so full of good sense ... then it is quite right to admire her.³⁴

According to the thorough treatment of the Homeric poems as the ultimate source of all knowledge in the anonymous *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, which was once believed to be authored by Plutarch, the fact that Homer often presents morally reprehensible deeds should not prevent us from attributing to him every virtue (*aretē*), for owing to the mixture of good and evil that the Homeric poems offer, 'the recognition and choice of the better becomes easier'.³⁵

Contrary to what one might have expected, the transition to Christianity did not bring about a radical change in the Greek attitude to Homer. The Homeric poems and especially the *Iliad* retained their status of school texts till the very end of the Byzantine empire. What is perhaps even more surprising, no serious attempts were made to Christianize them.³⁶ Offered instead were, again, various methods of interpretation. This for example is how St Basil instructed Christian youths to read pagan texts so as to 'accept from them only that which is useful':

Whenever they [the poets] recount for you the deeds or words of good men, you ought to cherish and emulate these and try to be as far as possible like them; but when they treat of wicked men, you ought to avoid such imitation, stopping your ears no less than Odysseus did, according to what those same poets say, when he avoided the songs of the Sirens.

This meant don't admire the poets 'when they depict men engaged in amours or drunken, or when they define happiness in terms of an over-abundant table of dissolute songs', and above all don't pay attention to them 'when they narrate

³⁴ *Mor.* 27 AB.

³⁵ *De Homero* 218, transl. J.J. Keaney and R. Lamberton.

³⁶ See Browning 1992, 146–47 and below, ch. 30, 357–58.

anything about the gods, and especially when they speak of them as being many, and these too not even in accord with one another'. These reservations aside, Basil, just as generations of pagan interpreters before and Christian interpreters after him, simply took it for granted that 'all Homer's poetry is an encomium of virtue' (*aretē*) and therefore cannot be easily dispensed with.³⁷

The capture of Constantinople in 1453 put an end to two and a half millennia of continuous development of Greek civilization. The epic tradition of the Trojan War, which gradually crystallized into the Homeric poems as we know them, accompanied this civilization through every stage of its existence, thus fulfilling the function of what the sociology of culture calls 'the dominant cultural arbitrary'.³⁸ These poems became the universally accepted frame of reference, in fact, the only frame of reference upon which the cultural language common to all those who belonged to the ancient Greek civilization was formed, and therefore an inseparable part of the identity of those who saw this civilization as their own.³⁹ This would not only explain why the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* outlived other epics that once circulated in Greek tradition but also justify treating them on a par with other foundation texts known to us from the history of civilization.

³⁷ *Ad adolescentes* 1.5; 5.6; 4.1–2; 4.4. Transl. R.J. Deferrari and M.R.P. McGuire.

³⁸ Cf. Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 5–11.

³⁹ Cf. Browning 1992, 147: 'The Byzantines were well aware that their own culture and their own peculiar identity had two roots—pagan and Christian ... History and tradition had made Homer the very symbol of a complex and tenacious culture that distinguished the Greek from the barbarian and also from the non-Greek Christian, Orthodox though it might be'.

28 ‘She Turns about in the Same Spot and Watches for Orion’: ancient criticism and exegesis of *Od.* 5.274 = *Il.* 18.488

1

Odysseus sails from the island Ogygia, the abode of the nymph Calypso, in the night:

οὐδέ οἱ ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτε
Πληιάδας τ' ἔσορῶντι καὶ ὀψέ δύοντα Βοώτην
Ἄρκτον θ', ἣν καὶ ἄμαξαν ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν,
ἢ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ' Ὠρίωνα δοκεύει,
οἷη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο·
τὴν γὰρ δὴ μιν ἄνωγε Καλυψώ, δῖα θεάων,
ποντοπορευέμεναι ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χειρὸς ἔχοντα.

Sleep never fell upon his eyelids as he watched the Pleiades and late-setting Boötes, and the Bear that men also call the Wagon; she turns about in the same spot and watches for Orion, and she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean. Calypso the goddess had told him to keep her on his left hand in his sailing.¹

Keeping the northern constellation of the Bear on his left indicates that Odysseus took the easterly course; on the eighteenth day he reached Scheria, the land of the Phaeacians.

This is the only passage in the entire Homeric corpus that contains a reference to stellar navigation. At the same time, a closer examination shows that the kind of stellar navigation it implies is somewhat problematic. This becomes clear as soon as we compare the *Odyssey* passage with the following passage from Aratus' *Phaenomena*:²

Δύω δέ μιν ἀμφὶς ἔχουσαι
Ἄρκτοι ἅμα τροχόωσι· τὸ δὲ καλέονται Ἄμαξαι.
...
Καὶ τὴν μὲν Κυνόσουραν ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσιν,
τὴν δ' ἐτέρην Ἑλίκην. Ἑλίκη γε μὲν ἄνδρες Ἀχαιοὶ
εἰν ἅλι τεκμαίρονται ἵνα χρεὶ νῆας ἀγινεῖν·
τῇ δ' ἄρα Φοίνικες πίσινοι περώωσι θάλασσαν.

1 *Od.* 5.271–77; my translation.

2 *Phaen.* 26–27, 36–44. Text and translation Kidd 1997.

Ἄλλ' ἢ μὲν καθαρὴ καὶ ἐπιφράσσασθαι ἐτοίμη
 πολλὴ φαινομένη Ἑλικὴ πρώτης ἀπὸ νυκτός·
 ἢ δ' ἑτέρη ὀλίγη μὲν, ἀτὰρ ναύτησιν ἀρείων·
 μειότερη γὰρ πᾶσα περιστρέφεται στροφάλιγγι·
 τῇ καὶ Σιδόνιοι ἰθύντατα ναυτίλλονται.

On either side of it [the Northern Pole] two Bears wheel in unison, and so they are also called the Wagons... Now one of the Bears men call Cynosura by name, the other Helice. Helice is the one by which Greek men at sea judge the course to steer their ships, while Phoenicians cross the sea relying on the other. Now the one is clear and easy to identify, Helice, being visible in all its grandeur as soon as night begins; the other is slight, yet a better guide to sailors, for it revolves entirely in a smaller circle: so by it the Sidonians sail the straightest course.

According to a firmly established tradition, it was not before Thales the Milesian (ca. 600 BCE) that the Little Bear, also called Cynosura, became known to the Greeks.³ Nevertheless, it remained so strongly associated with the Phoenician way of navigation that it was even given the name ‘Phoenice’.⁴ The Greeks on their part continued to steer their ships by the less accurate but more conspicuous sign of the Great Bear, also called ‘Helice’.⁵ The association of the latter with the Greek way of navigation was so strong that even the Homeric formula ἐλίκωπες Ἀχαιοί was often interpreted as ‘those who fix their eyes on Helice’.⁶ It is this traditional Greek way of navigation that is evoked, for example, in the following verses of Apollonius Rhodius, obviously alluding to *Odyssey* 5.274: οἱ δ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ / ναυτίλοι εἰς Ἑλικὴν τε καὶ ἀστέρας Ὠρίωνος / ἔδρακον ἐκ νηῶν (‘and on the sea the navigators from their ships looked towards Helice and the stars of Orion’).⁷

³ See Martin 1974, 72.3–4 (on 26–27); 89.1–2 (on 39). Cf. also below, nn. 6 and 8. Thales was believed to have written a *Maritime Astronomy*, see 11 B 1-2 DK.

⁴ Martin 1974, 74.11–12 (on 27); cf. *ibid.*, 90.8–10 (on 37–44; quoted below, n. 10); Eust. 4.223.13–17 van der Valk (on *Il.* 18.489). Cf. also Call. fr. 191.53–5; Strab. 1.1.6 p. 3; Kidd 1997, 189–90.

⁵ Martin 1974, 87.3–5 (on 37). Cf. Kidd 1997, 188 (on *Phaen.* 37): ‘This name [Helice] for the Great Bear is presumably derived from its conspicuously wheeling movement round the pole’. Cf. also Hainsworth in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 276–77: ‘If he used the northerly stars of Ursa Major as a fixed beacon, a navigator would be off course to the maximum extent of c. 130, hardly a serious matter for a single night’s voyage amid the vagaries of wind and current. Ursa Major therefore continued to be the Greek guide’.

⁶ Cf. Martin 1974, 87.8–10 (on 37); 89.2–7 (on 39); Eust. 4.223.13–17 van der Valk.

⁷ Ap. Rhod. 3.744–46. Cf. Kidd 1997, 188 (on *Phaen.* 37): ‘A.R. in 3.745 recalls the Homeric scene in ε 272, but replaces Homer’s Ἄρκτος with Aratus’ Ἑλικη...’

It is however far from clear which of the Bears the *Odyssey* passage actually addresses. Although it is reasonable to suppose that it is on the ‘Greek’ constellation of the Great Bear, presumably the only one known to Homer, that Odysseus would fix his eyes while sailing on his raft,⁸ ἥ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται, ‘she turns about in the same spot’, at 5.274 firmly points in the direction of the Little Bear. Consider again Aratus’ description of the latter: ‘the other is slight, yet a better guide to sailors, for it revolves entirely in a smaller circle’. The scholiasts are even more explicit: ‘...and Cynosura the Little [Bear]; for since it is short it turns about in the same spot (ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ στρέφεται); it is also more easily observable—not on account of its shine (for it is dim), but because it turns about in the same spot (τῷ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ στρέφεσθαι)’; ‘although Cynosura is not conspicuous by its light—as a matter of fact, it is dim,—it is nevertheless more serviceable for sailors; and he [Aratus] adds that it revolves sooner and its orbit is shorter, so that turning about in the same spot (ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ στρεφομένη) it is easily observable’.⁹

It was thus a matter of common knowledge that, whereas the ‘Greek’ constellation of the Great Bear followed the orbit that ran around the entire polar circle, the ‘Phoenician’ Little Bear turned in the same spot around the pole.¹⁰ It is not difficult to discern that this is exactly the kind of motion implied by ἥ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται at *Odyssey* 5.274.

2

The expression ἥ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται was also, in a somewhat different context, taken by ancient commentators as implying another anachronistic idea, that of a spherical earth and universe. I mean the opening passage of Homer’s description of the Shield of Achilles, whose vv. 487–89 exactly correspond to vv. 273–75 of the *Odyssey* passage (*Il.* 18.483–89):

Ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ’, ἐν δ’ οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
ἡελίον τ’ ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθουσσαν,
ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντα, τὰ τ’ οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται,
Πληιάδας θ’ Ὑάδας τε τό τε σθένος Ὠρίωνος
Ἄρκτον θ’, ἦν καὶ Ἀμαξαν ἐπὶ κλησιν καλέουσιν,

⁸ Cf. Paus. 8.3.7; schol. D on *Il.* 18.487.

⁹ Martin 1974, 88.13–89.1 (on 39); 89.13–90 (on 42); cf. also *ibid.*, 87.3–7; 90.7–10; 90.21–91.2 (on 37, 37–44, 44).

¹⁰ See Martin 1974, 87.6–7 (on 37) ἡ μὲν γὰρ Κυνόσουρα περὶ τὸν πόλον ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅλον βόρειον κύκλον; cf. *ibid.*, 90.8–10 (on 37–44).

ἦ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ' Ὠρίωνα δοκεῖν,
οἷη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο.

On it he made the earth, and sky, and sea, the tireless sun and the moon growing full, and all the constellations that the heaven has around it as a crown, and Pleiades and Hyades, and the mighty Orion, and the Bear that men also call the Wagon; she turns about in the same spot and watches for Orion, and she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean.

According to the A scholia on *Iliad* 18.485, rather than τὰ τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται, which gives the line in question the sense ‘[the constellations] that the heaven has around it as a crown’, Zenodotus read τὰ τ' οὐρανὸν [οὐρανῶ?] ἐστήρικται,¹¹ ‘[the constellations] that are fixed in the heaven’, and Aristarchus read τὰ τ' οὐρανὸν ἐστεφάνωκε, ‘[the constellations] that garland the heaven’.¹² As James Porter has argued, Aristarchus’ object was to block the possibility of construing the Homeric text to the effect that Homer envisaged the constellations as forming a crown shaped by the vault of heaven and circling above and below the horizon—an interpretation which would contradict the flat-earth view characteristic of the Homeric poems; this editorial activity was presumably directed against Aristarchus’ contemporary and rival Crates of Mallus, who famously claimed that Homer entertained the idea of a spherical earth and universe.¹³ Not only ἐστεφάνωται at *Iliad* 18.485 but also στρέφεται at *Iliad* 18.488, identical to *Odyssey* 5.274 which was the starting point of this discussion, communicates this idea. Compare indeed the following remark by the scholiast: ‘That heaven is shaped as a circle (κυκλοτέρης) is shown by ‘turns about’ (στρέφεται), as well as by ‘is crowned’ (ἐστεφάνωται)’.¹⁴

Thus, as against one problematic line in *Odyssey* 5, *Iliad* 18 provides two—18.485, which contains the idea of a spherical earth and heaven, and 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274, which suggests Homer’s knowledge of the Little Bear, and, again, the idea of a spherical earth and heaven. At the same time, it is difficult to avoid the impression that it is the *Odyssey* rather than the *Iliad* passage that is more appropri-

11 Cf. *H.Herm.* 11 οὐρανῶ ἐστήρικτο, *Il.* 4.443 οὐρανῶ ἐστήριξε.

12 Interestingly, Aristarchus’ ἐστεφάνωκε appears in F.-A. Wolf’s list of ‘inept readings’, which he ‘would rather assign to Zenodotus or one of the earlier editors than to Aristarchus’, see Wolf 1988, 197–98 and n. 29. According to the A scholia on *Il.* 18.483, Zenodotus athetized vv. 483–608, that is, the entire description of the Shield of Achilles; for discussion see Apthorp 1980, 187–88. For the critical apparatus see M. West 2000, *ad loc.*

13 Porter 1992, 91–93. On Crates see Mette 1936; on Aristarchus and Crates see also van der Valk 1963, 465–67.

14 Schol. T on *Il.* 18.488; cf. Porter 1992, 93. See also Eust. 4.221.10 van der Valk.

ate to the context in which it appears. While the picture of the starry sky introduced in *Iliad* 18 is too general to require such a detailed description of one of the constellations, Odysseus’ directing his course by a constellation which ‘turns about in the same spot’ and ‘has no share in the baths of Ocean’ fits in remarkably well with the figure of a lonely sailor making his way in unknown waters.¹⁵

3

Note now that *Od.* 5.274 = *Il.* 18.488 is the only line that prevents us from unreservedly taking both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* passages as referring to the Great Bear. Although both the unspecified *arktos* at *Od.* 5.273 = *Il.* 18.487 and ‘she has no share in the baths of Ocean’ at *Od.* 5.275 = *Il.* 18.489 would fit either constellation (cf. Arat. *Phaen.* 48), the emphatic ‘alone’ (οἷη) emerging in ‘and she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean’ at *Od.* 5.275 = *Il.* 18.489 strongly suggests that it is the Great Bear, the only one generally believed to have been known to the Greeks at the time of Homer, that could be meant here. Furthermore, the name *Hamaxa*, ‘Wagon’, emerging in *Od.* 5.273 = *Il.* 18.487, was commonly regarded as the exclusive designation of this constellation; in fact, Aratus, in the passage quoted in Section 1, was the first to apply the name ‘Wagon’ to both Bears.¹⁶

The line οἷη δ’ ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὀκεανοῖο (*Il.* 18.489 = *Od.* 5.275) was known to Aristotle, who quoted it in the *Poetics* as an example of metaphor: although the Bear is not the only constellation which never goes down below the horizon, it is the most conspicuous one; later commentators preferred to take this Homeric line as referring to all the star-groups mentioned in the passage.¹⁷ Aristotle does not specify whether it was the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* passage that he had in mind, but the very fact of his referring to it makes it clear that the line in question was part of Homer’s text in his time.

According to Strabo, Crates of Mallus (2nd century BCE) tried to emend this line by reading οἷος instead of οἷη: Crates’ object in changing the gender of the

¹⁵ For discussion see Danek 1998, 128–29 (with bibliography).

¹⁶ Cf. Martin 1974, 77.8–10 (on 27): κυρίως γὰρ ἡ Ἑλίκη ἄμαξα λέγεται· οἱ γὰρ ἑπτὰ αὐτῆς ἀστέρες ἀμάξης τύπον ἔχουσιν. Cf. schol. D on *Il.* 18.487. Cf. also Kidd 1997, 182 (on *Phaen.* 27): ‘Originally this [*Hamaxa*] was a name for the Great Bear only, but Aratus now applies it, with Ἄρκτοι, to the Little Bear also. Callimachus then uses it of the Little Bear by itself in fr. 191.54’.

¹⁷ *Poet.* 1461 a 21. Cf. schol. b on *Il.* 18.489; Porph. on *Il.* 226.4 Schrader; Eust. 4.224.1–3 van der Valk. See, however, Ap. Soph. 29.10–14, s.v. ἄμμορον: ‘He says that because he does not know that other [constellations] also do not go down’.

noun *arktos* was to make it designate the entire arctic circle, that is, the circum-polar zone on the celestial sphere, rather than the constellation of the Bear alone. Yet, as Strabo’s discussion makes clear, this correction was hardly necessary, for those who wished to credit Homer with advanced astronomical knowledge read the *arktos* of this passage as referring to the arctic circle anyway:

That is, by the terms ‘Bear’ and ‘Wagon’ he [Homer] means the ‘arctic circle’; for otherwise he would not have said of the Bear that ‘she alone has no share in the baths of Ocean’, since so many stars revolve in that very region, which is always visible ... Therefore Crates is not correct when, in trying to avoid what need not be avoided, he writes ‘and it (οἶος) alone has no share in the baths of Ocean’.¹⁸

On the other hand, Apollonius Sophista (ca. 100 CE) says that Crates read the line in question as ἡ δ’ ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο;¹⁹ this would obviously be at variance with Strabo’s report as adduced above.

Proceeding from Crates’ well attested activity concerning *Iliad* 18.489, Porter suggested that the Pergamene scholar also tampered with the description of the Bear in the preceding line: ‘Crates’ hand can be felt here [in *Il.* 18.488] (as in the next line, which he emended to his own liking; Strabo 1.1.6).²⁰ Yet, although it seems likely that *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 was emended or even interpolated in full, a closer examination shows that Crates can not be held responsible for it. First, we saw that long before Crates Apollonius Rhodius almost certainly alluded to *Od.* 5.274 in his *Argonautica* (above, with n. 7). Second, its vivid representation of the Bear (cf. below) is distinctly at variance with Crates’ interpretation of the *arktos* of this passage as an abstract noun designating the entire arctic circle. Third, the very manner in which Apollonius Sophista quotes Crates’ reading of *Il.* 18.488–89 (above, n. 19) shows that *Iliad* 18.488 as we know it was already present in Crates’ text of Homer.²¹ Finally, while ἡ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται (*Il.* 18.488 =

¹⁸ Strab. 1.1.6 p. 3; transl. H.L. Jones, slightly adapted. Cf. Hainsworth in Heubeck, S. West, Hainsworth 1988, 278 (on *Od.* 5.275). It is probable that the source of Strabo’s passage is Posidonius, see Aujac 1969, 176 n. (with bibliography).

¹⁹ Ap. Soph. 29.14–15, s.v. ἄμμορον· ὁ δὲ Κράτης οὕτως ἀναγινώσκει· ‘ἡ δ’ τ’ αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καὶ τ’ Ὠρίωνα δοκεύει’, μέχρι τούτου καταλέγων· ‘ἡ δ’ ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο’, ἵνα τὸ συμβεβηκὸς αὐτῇ καὶ ἑτέροις τῶν ἄστρον ἀκούηται. According to the correction proposed by H. Helck, the unmetrical ἡ of this passage should be emended in such a way as to make Crates responsible for the attempt, attested in Porph. on *Il.* 225.25, to divide οἷη at *Il.* 18.489 into οἶ on the one hand and ἡ on the other, cf. Mette 1936, F 25b; Haslam 1994, 5.

²⁰ Porter 1992, 93.

²¹ If correct, this reference to Crates would be the earliest external attestation of *Il.* 18.488. The line is also quoted by Strabo (1.1.6 p. 4, see below, with n. 26) and appears in the papyri of the

Od. 5.274) is part of the text of Homer as we have it, Crates’ οἶος (*Il.* 18.489 = *Od.* 5.275) is not. All this strongly suggests that Crates did not exert any influence on *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 either.

The same must also be true of τὰ τ’ οὐρανὸς ἑστεφάνωται at *Iliad* 18.485, another Homeric expression introducing the idea of a spherical earth and heaven.²² We have seen indeed that, a hundred years before Aristarchus and Crates, Zenodotus gave his own version of it (above, p. 334), and it goes without saying that Aristarchus’ οὐρανὸν ἑστεφάνωκε cannot be studied separately from Zenodotus’ οὐρανὸν ἑστήρικται. We cannot be absolutely certain that the line that Zenodotus and Aristarchus had before their eyes was identical to ours. But if this was indeed the case and if Zenodotus’ successor Apollonius already knew *Odyssey* 5.274, it would mean that the person who tampered with the text of Homer with the intention of crediting the poet with the knowledge of the Little Bear and spherical universe, must have been a contemporary of Zenodotus (first half of the 3rd century BCE) at the very least.²³

4

While the image of the Bear keeping a watchful eye on Orion the hunter was generally admired and considered to be executed ‘gracefully’ (χαριέντως) and ‘elegantly’ (ἁστέως),²⁴ this is not yet to say that the problem arising from its being described as turning about in the same spot passed unnoticed. Several lines of interpretation were proposed to meet the difficulty. One, represented in the bT scholia to the *Iliad* (the so-called ‘exegetical scholia’), concentrated mainly on attempts to identify patterns of language and style in Homer and other poets that would allow the noun *arktos* to stand for both Bears.²⁵ Another continued the tendency, first introduced by Crates (above), of understanding the Homeric *arktos* as referring to the entire arctic circle. This is neatly reflected in Strabo:

Roman period that cover this part of the *Iliad*. On the list of the latter see M. West 2001, 88–138 (nos. 9, 11, 239).

²² The phrase τὰ τ’ οὐρανὸς ἑστεφάνωται also appears in Hes. *Th.* 382, where it concludes the list of the children of Dawn and Astraeus. However, it is omitted in *P.Oxy.* 2643, the only papyrus text at our disposal that contains this *Theogony* passage.

²³ The *diorthōsis* of the *Odyssey* by Aratus—a Stoic, an expert in astronomy, a scholar, and an epic poet in full command of the Homeric style—comes to mind in this connection. On Aratus see Pfeiffer 1968, 120–22; Rengakos 1993, 10–11, 165–66, and below, ch. 29, 344.

²⁴ See schol. bT on *Il.* 18.488; Eust. 4.227.7–10 van der Valk. Cf. M.W. Edwards 1991, 212–13.

²⁵ See schol. bT, T on *Il.* 18.488.

Accordingly, by 'the Bear,' which he also calls 'the Wagon', and describes as watching for Orion, Homer means the arctic circle ... And when he says that the Bear turns about in the same spot having no share in Ocean he knows that the arctic circle is over the most northerly point of the horizon.²⁶

Obviously, as soon as *arktos* comes to designate all the circumpolar stars rather than the constellation of the Great Bear alone, the difficulty arising from its being described as revolving in the same spot disappears. A similar approach, found for example in the scholia to Aratus, was to take the Homeric counterpoising of the Bear and Orion as allegorical of the northern and the southern constellations respectively.²⁷

It is of course immaterial whether or not Homeric Greeks actually 'knew' only the Great Bear. The only thing that matters is that Homer's commentators were unanimous in thinking that this was indeed the case, and this is why the line in question presented a problem in their eyes. Yet, although it was only rarely that *Il.* 18.488 = *Od.* 5.274 was regarded as unproblematic,²⁸ ancient commentators consistently avoided casting doubt on it. The following passage from the apologetic treatise *De Homero*, incorporated in full into the *Odyssey* scholia, seems especially illuminating in this respect:

He [Homer] also knew the Bear that always turns around the permanently visible north pole star and never passes below the horizon, because of its elevation. He knew that the smallest circle, that of the Bear, and the largest, that of Orion. turn in the revolution of the cosmos in exactly the same time.²⁹

It goes without saying that 'the smallest circle, that of the Bear' could only refer to the constellation of the Little Bear, and that the phrase 'he also knew the Bear that always turns around the permanently visible north pole star' makes especially good sense if taken as alluding to Homer's knowledge of this particular constellation. Yet, even if the author of *De Homero* did discern which of the two constellations the Homeric line actually addressed, neither he nor any other ancient commentator ever attempted to explore the implications that this conclusion might have for the received text. The reason is clear: in the centuries that followed the standardization of the text of Homer, the tendency to avoid altering

²⁶ Strab. 1.1.6 p. 4.

²⁷ Martin 1974, 236–37 (on 322).

²⁸ As, e.g., in schol. D on *Il.* 18.488: "She turns about in the same spot": instead of "around the same place", for it never sets'.

²⁹ [Plutarch] *De Homero* 106 = E on *Od.* 5.272. Transl. J.J. Keaney and R. Lamberton (with slight changes).

the received text became the dominant one. This attitude guaranteed that, in spite of the problems of interpretation that some of them created, the lines and passages that had been interpolated in earlier epochs were not questioned. What was offered instead were various methods of interpretation. It was by validating the standard text rather than by interfering with it that the reception of the Homeric poems normally proceeded. Such interpretative generosity is a typical hermeneutical attitude developed in any given society towards the canonical text.³⁰

30 Cf. also above, ch. 27, 326–30 and below, ch. 30, 355–57.

29 Regional Texts and the Circulation of Books: The Case of Homer

This chapter is an attempt at contextualization of the transmission of Homer's text in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. Its main thesis is that until the emergence of Constantinople as the central authority for the Greek-speaking world, the production, circulation and transmission of books concentrated around autonomous regional centres and that Alexandria was one such centre among others. Comparison with the patterns of circulation of early Christian texts suggests some useful parallels.

1 Books and central authority

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the second ruler of Hellenistic Egypt, was born on the island of Cos in 308 BCE. Some time afterwards, Ptolemy I appointed the poet and scholar Philetas of Cos as his son's tutor. Ptolemy I's original intention was probably nothing more than to follow the precedent set by Philip II of Macedon, who invited Aristotle to be tutor to the young Alexander. The king could hardly have been aware of the fact that in creating the position of royal tutor he was himself establishing a precedent whose historical consequences were to go far beyond the immediate objective of giving a proper education to his heir. Ptolemy II was crowned in 283. Not long after, he founded a library in his capital Alexandria and appointed his second tutor, Philetas' pupil Zenodotus of Ephesus, as its head (*prostatēs*). Thus a tradition was established according to which the tutor to the children of the royal family was also head of the Library of Alexandria. The great Homeric scholars Zenodotus of Ephesus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus of Samothrace, each of them responsible for a recension of the Homeric poems, take pride of place in this list.¹ The Alexandrian scholars were thus members of the Ptolemaic court and an integral part of the Establishment.²

¹ Throughout this chapter I translate the Greek term *diorthōsis* as 'recension': cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 94; Nagy 1996b, 115–16. Another possible rendering, introduced in Nagy 2004, 22, 85, is 'corrective editing'.

² The position of royal tutor is explicitly attested for Zenodotus, for his successor Apollonius of Rhodes, and for Aristarchus of Samothrace; in view of this it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the two other heads of the Alexandrian library, Eratosthenes and Aristophanes, also held this position. Cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 154; Bulloch 1989, 4.

This close connection between scholarship and power is rarely taken into account in current treatments of Hellenistic scholarship.³ We are still invited to envisage the relations between scholars or the texts they produced in the vein of Romantic criticism, that is, as resulting from the interaction of great minds taking place beyond time and space. It seems, however, that approaching Hellenistic scholarship, in Alexandria and elsewhere, in the perspective of its social context is indispensable for the proper understanding of the history of the texts at our disposal, first and foremost the text of Homer.

Since the publication in 1788 of the so-called Venetus A, a magnificently produced manuscript of the *Iliad* accompanied by copious scholia throwing much light on the Alexandrian philological tradition, it has become increasingly obvious that, in spite of the great prestige of the Alexandrian scholars, first and foremost Aristarchus of Samothrace, the Byzantine text of Homer—and, consequently, the text of ours—contains a negligibly small number of the readings they proposed. Thus, of 385 Zenodotean readings attested in our sources, only 4 appear in all the medieval manuscripts, 34 in the majority, 12 in about half, 29 in a minority, 64 in a few, and 259 in none; of 874 Aristarchean readings only 80 appear in all the medieval manuscripts, 160 in the majority, 76 in about half, 181 in a minority, 245 in a few, and 132 in none, and so on.⁴ As Robert Lamberton puts it, 'One might have expected Aristarchus to prevail, but the vulgate text is not his'.⁵ Another major source demonstrating beyond doubt that the scholars' texts of Homer exerted no significant influence on those in the hands of the general public is the evidence supplied by the papyri. As is well known, the amount of the ancient manuscripts containing segments of the Homeric poems, first and foremost the *Iliad*, unearthed in the sands of Egypt has been especially impressive.⁶ The evidence of the papyri shows that, whatever the differences between the ancient manuscripts themselves (see below), they were even less influenced

3 See, however, Pfeiffer 1968, 98; S. West 1967, 16; Easterling 1989, 186–87; Gamble 1995, 177.

4 For the figures see Allen 1931, 199–204; cf. Apthorp 1980, 9; Janko 1992, 22 n. 9.

5 Lamberton 1997, 14; cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 215; S. West 1967, 16. Actually, this was the conclusion arrived at by F.-A. Wolf immediately upon the publication of the Venetus A scholia, see Wolf 1985, 68. In Wolf's opinion, however, the discrepancy between Aristarchus' readings and the medieval vulgate was due to the corruption of the 'pure form of the Aristarchean text' in the course of time; yet, the evidence of the papyri, some of which go back to the time of Aristarchus, unambiguously testifies to the opposite.

6 See further Marrou 1964, 244–45; Wilson 1983, 18–19; Haslam 1997, 60–61; Morgan 1998, 69, 105; Criboire 2001, 140–42, 194.

by the readings proposed by Alexandrian scholars than was the medieval vulgate.⁷

The only province in which the Alexandrian scholars seem to have had an influence on the texts of Homer that circulated in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt was the *numerus versuum*, that is, the number of lines constituting the Homeric poems. As the evidence provided by the papyri demonstrates, after ca. 150 BCE variants and especially additions, found in abundance in the earlier papyri (the so-called 'wild' or 'eccentric' papyri), suddenly disappear. This coincides with the activity of Aristarchus of Samothrace, who undertook to purge the text of Homer of extra lines, in particular repetitions, which had accumulated in the course of centuries.⁸ The majority opinion tends to regard this phenomenon as a by-product of the book trade: while the customers knew enough about the newly established length of the poems to be interested in purchasing a copy of the improved text, they did not care much about textual variants. Yet it is hard not to agree with Michael Haslam that this explanation does not really solve the problem: 'If we imagine an Aristarchan text available to proprietors of scriptoria, it has to be explained why they should not simply have reproduced it. We are invited to envisage a public so insistent to have Aristarchan texts that all non-Aristarchan lines were cancelled, yet so ignorant and uncaring that Aristarchan readings could be routinely passed over'.⁹

Probably due to the above-mentioned tendency to treat scholarship in isolation from its social context, it has been generally overlooked that the standardization of the *numerus versuum* coincided with major political developments in Ptolemaic Egypt. In 145/4 BCE, after the death of Ptolemy VI, his younger brother usurped the throne of Egypt to become Ptolemy VIII. The new king's former tutor and head of the Library, Aristarchus of Samothrace, was forced to leave Alexandria together with his pupils (the so-called *secessio doctorum*), and a senior military officer named Cydas was appointed as chief librarian.¹⁰ This is exactly when the 'eccentric' papyri became obsolete. The coincidence is telling, to say the least, and this is why I find it odd that Homeric scholars as a rule do not try to establish a correlation between the two events. The only exception seems to have been Gregory Nagy, who argued in *Poetry and Performance* that, just as the first standardization of the text of Homer in the sixth century BCE was due to the regulation

⁷ See Allen 1931, 83–85; McNamee 1981, 247; S. West 1988, 44–45; Janko 1992.

⁸ For discussion see S. West 1967, 15–17; Apthorp 1980, 1–14.

⁹ Haslam 1997, 84–85.

¹⁰ On Cydas see Pfeiffer 1968, 212 and n. 2.

of rhapsodic performances by the Athenian state, so also the second standardization in the middle of the second century BCE should be explained by similar reasons.¹¹

If we further take into account (a) that Ptolemy VIII was a pupil of Aristarchus and therefore must have been closely familiar with the latter's text of Homer; (b) that, judging by the conjecture for *Odyssey* 5.72 that he proposed,¹² he claimed to be a Homeric scholar; and (c) that his new head of the Library was a virtual non-entity as a man of learning, it can be suggested that it was due to the personal initiative of this Ptolemaic ruler that the curious phenomenon of the adoption of the *numerus versuum* established by Aristarchus and the rejection of the readings he proposed was produced.

This conclusion can be further corroborated by comparative evidence. This unequivocally points out that it is through the intervention of the central authority that the standardization of texts circulating in a given community normally proceeds, especially as the texts in question are possessed of a high status in the community. As Moshe Greenberg has showed in a seminal article, this was certainly the case with the standardization of the text of the Hebrew Bible:

The editorial work of the bookmen did not immediately affect the Bibles in the hands of the people. Only after the consolidation of Rabbinic Judaism between the two revolts (70–132) did a more thorough supervision of the text on the basis of the standard become possible.¹³

The same with the early Christian tradition. To quote Kurt and Barbara Aland,

The more loosely organized a diocese, or the greater the differences between its constituent churches, the more likely different text types would coexist (as in early Egypt). The more uniform its organization, the more likely there would be only a single text type, as exemplified by the Byzantine Imperial text type [of the New Testament] which expanded its influence rapidly from the fourth century to become increasingly the dominant text of the Byzantine church.¹⁴

11 Nagy 1996b, 144. On the sixth-century standardization of the text of Homer see above, ch. 25, and below, ch. 31.

12 See further Pfeiffer 1968, 212.

13 Greenberg 1956, 161. See also *ibid.* 166: 'The editing was a continuous process which reached its end by the first Christian century, well before the First Revolt. The standard became all prevalent, however, only after the fall of Jerusalem, when Rabbinic Judaism came into exclusive hegemony. Previously the various stages of the text work coexisted in the Bibles of the people'. Cf. also Kenyon 1958, 72.

14 Aland and Aland 1989, 55.

I see no reason why Ptolemaic Egypt should have differed in this respect. It seems indeed reasonable to suppose that in its case too it was first and foremost the intervention of a central authority, the state, that was responsible for the standardization of the Egyptian text of Homer in the middle of the second century BCE. Whether this standardization should also be projected onto the rest of the Hellenistic world is however an entirely different question.

2 Regional centres of learning and book production

Antiochus I became sole king of the Seleucid realm in 281 BCE, and Antigonus II Gonatas became king of Macedonia in 277. Everything points in the direction that these rulers and their successors followed the example of the Ptolemies in turning their capitals into centres of learning. During the reign of Antigonus II, a literary circle flourished at the court of Pella.¹⁵ It included the poets Alexander Aetolus, who had also worked in Alexandria, and Aratus of Soli, the author of the *Phaenomena*, credited in our sources with a recension of the *Odyssey*. At some later stage, however, Aratus joined the court of Antioch, where he is said to have been commissioned by Antiochus I to prepare a new recension of the *Iliad*; he apparently returned to Pella after that king's death.¹⁶

Moreover, the evidence at our disposal leaves no room for doubt that by the end of the third century BCE both Antioch and Pella had royal libraries of their own: somewhere after 223 the poet Euphorion of Chalkis was appointed by Antiochus III as head of the library at Antioch,¹⁷ whereas the very fact that in 168 BCE the royal Macedonian library (which probably contained the copy of the Homeric poems made for Cassander of Macedonia long before the foundation of the library at Alexandria) was seized by Aemilius Paulus and transferred from Pella to Rome shows clearly enough that such a library had been in existence.¹⁸ All this allows

¹⁵ See further Pfeiffer 1968, 107–108.

¹⁶ See *Vita* I: 'and he also prepared a recension of the *Odyssey*, a recension that is called "Aratean", in the manner of "Aristarchean" and "Aristophanean". Some say that he went to Syria and was introduced to Antiochus and was requested by him to produce a recension of the *Iliad*, because (so he said) its text had been spoilt by many'; Suda, 'Aratus... A recension of the *Odyssey*', in Martin 1974, 8.18–24; 22.18. F.-A. Wolf 1985, 166, suggested that Aratus' work on the *Iliad* was completed by Rhianus, whose edition is often mentioned in the scholia. On Aratus see Pfeiffer 1968, 120–22; Rengakos 1993, 10–11, 165–66 and above, ch. 28.

¹⁷ Suda, s.v. Cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 122.

¹⁸ On Cassander see Ath. 14.12.3–7: '... Cassander who became king of Macedonia, of whom Carystius says in his *Historical Commentaries* that he admired Homer to such a degree that he knew most of his verses by heart and even had in his possession the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* written

us to conclude that, even if on a lesser scale than Alexandria, the capitals of the two other major Hellenistic kingdoms were centres of learning in their own right.

It was, however, the fourth Hellenistic kingdom that produced a library destined to become the full-scale rival of the library of Alexandria. In 197 BCE, Eumenes II succeeded Attalus I on the throne of Pergamum. There is good reason to suppose that scholarly research and book collection at the Attalid court predate this event.¹⁹ Yet it was Eumenes II who founded a library, and it soon became the second major institution of this kind in the Hellenistic world. After several unsuccessful attempts to bring to Pergamum some of the leading scholars of the time, among them Aristophanes of Byzantium, Eumenes II succeeded in appointing the Stoic philosopher Crates of Mallos as head of the library. Crates' rivalry with Aristarchus of Samothrace, the chief librarian at Alexandria, is too well known to be dwelt upon here: suffice it to say that Crates' interpretative strategies were very different from those of Aristarchus and that he too prepared a recension of Homer which, naturally enough, was heavily influenced by the strategies in question.²⁰

Note that not only Zenodotus, Aristophanes and Aristarchus but also other scholars who occupied the position of chief librarian at Alexandria and other Hellenistic courts either produced their own texts of Homer or wrote extensive commentaries on the Homeric poems. The first Ptolemaic tutor, Philetas of Cos, collected rare Homeric words and suggested interpretations which were still influential at the time of Aristarchus of Samothrace; Zenodotus' successor Apollonius Rhodius wrote a book *Against Zenodotus* and suggested his own readings of the Homeric text; Apollonius' successor Eratosthenes dealt extensively with Homeric problems in his chronological and especially geographical work; Aratus and Crates prepared their own recensions of the Homeric poems, and so on.²¹ It seems to follow from this that the credentials of an expert Homerist were the major requirement for the position of chief librarian, both in Alexandria and elsewhere. Given the fact that the superior status of Alexandrian scholarship was generally recognized in antiquity, it may be asked why all these alternative texts of Homer continued to be produced.

down especially for him (ἰδίως γεγραμμένοι). On the expression ἰδίως γεγραμμένοι see Wolf 1985, 157 n. 37; Nagy 1996b, 158 and n. 20.

19 See esp. Kosmetatou 2003, 56–58; cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 246–47.

20 On Aristarchus and Crates see Porter 1992, and above, ch. 27, 326–28; on the recension of Crates see Suda, s.v.; Nagy 1998, 215; on the rivalry between Pergamon and Alexandria see Wyrick 2004, 214–20.

21 On Philetas of Cos, Apollonius Rhodius and Eratosthenes see Pfeiffer 1968, 90–91, 146–47, 163–68; on Aratus see above, n. 16; on Crates see above, with n. 20.

At the end of the preceding section, we came to the conclusion that the standardization of a text can only be achieved through the intervention of a central authority. No overarching central authority, however, was in existence in the Hellenistic world. Or, to put it the other way round, there were no less than four such authorities, one for each of the major Hellenistic kingdoms. It follows from this that, when speaking of the authoritative Hellenistic text of Homer, we should abandon the usual practice of privileging Alexandria, which after all was only one Hellenistic capital among others, and envisage at least four such texts—Egyptian, Syrian, Macedonian, and Pergamene. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine circumstances under which, say, a Seleucid king might choose to educate his heir by using an edition of Homer imported from the court of his arch-enemy (six wars were waged between Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria between 274 and 168 BCE): it is much more likely that he would wish to signal his state's cultural hegemony by adopting an edition produced by a Homeric scholar working at his own court or at that of one of his predecessors. Insofar indeed as the library was an institution of the state and Homer the most esteemed text in the Greek world, the production of the state text of Homer must have been considered not only a scholarly enterprise but also a matter of national prestige.

The Antigonid kingdom of Macedonia was dissolved in 168 BCE, and in 149/8 Macedonia became a Roman province; it was followed by Pergamum in 133. Seventy years later, Pompey made Syria a Roman province, and in 31 BCE Egypt, the last independent Hellenistic kingdom, fell to Octavian. The centuries-old bond between Hellenistic scholarship and the State was broken. The Roman takeover in the East also had far-reaching repercussions in terms of the physical existence of Hellenistic libraries. As already mentioned, the Pella library was transferred to Rome as early as 168 BCE. Somewhere around 41 BCE, the Pergamum library was either entirely or in part transferred to Alexandria by Mark Antony, to recoup the damage caused by fire in the siege of the city by Julius Caesar. Consequently, Alexandria and Antioch, now the capitals of Roman provinces, remained the only two former Hellenistic centres where the tradition of a library as the focus of learning and book production continued unbroken into the Roman era.

Aristonicus and Didymus, who worked in Alexandria in the time of Augustus, were still able to consult the manuscripts by Zenodotus, Aristophanes and Aristarchus, and the same was true of Nicanor and Herodian in the second century CE: the work of these four scholars forms the main corpus of the scholia preserved in Venetus A.²² Strabo testifies to the fact that Tiberius (14–37 CE) supported the

²² See further M. West 2001, 46–50.

Museum, and there is no reason to think that the other emperors behaved differently.²³ Our evidence concerning Antioch relates to a later period (see below), but the fact that, excluding the short interval between 194 and 201, the city retained its status of the capital of the province of Syria allows hardly any doubt that its position as a centre of learning was sustained during this period as well.²⁴

Meanwhile, significant developments were taking place in the production and circulation of books. Classical literature was read in Origen's school at Caesarea, a city that gradually emerged as a major centre of learning and book production, and Origen adapted the system of marginal signs used by the Alexandrians to the Old Testament (233–238 CE). A greater need of educated men in the civil service is clearly discernible since the time of Diocletian (the end of the 3rd century), and Greek was gradually replacing Latin as 'the language of power' of the Eastern Empire.²⁵ The two latter developments must have further secured the central position of Homer, the cornerstone of Greek *paideia*, in the production and circulation of books. Whose text of Homer was regarded as authoritative during this period is not clear, but the location of the major scriptoria, alongside the evidence concerning the transmission of the text of the New Testament, strongly suggests that there were at least two such texts--the Egyptian (Alexandria) and the Syrian (Antioch).

Towards the end of the third--the beginning of the fourth century CE, the New Testament Koine text, which would eventually take over from the Alexandrian Koine to become the Byzantine Imperial Text, was consolidated in Antioch and rapidly expanded its influence. I believe that this should be regarded as a fact of major importance in any reconstruction of the history of the Byzantine text of Homer, and I find it surprising that, to the best of my knowledge, T.W. Allen has been the only scholar to suggest that the history of the New Testament text

²³ Strab. 17.1.8, p. 794: 'The Museum is also a part of the royal palaces; it has a public walk ... and a large house, in which is the common mess-hall of the men of learning who share the Museum (τῶν μετεχόντων τοῦ Μουσείου φιλολόγων ἀνδρῶν). This group of men not only hold property in common, but also have a priest in charge of the Museum, who formerly was appointed by the kings, but is now appointed by Caesar' (transl. H.L. Jones).

²⁴ Cf. Strab. 16.2.5, p. 750: 'Antioch is the metropolis of Syria; and here was established the royal residence for the rulers of the country. And it does not fall much short, either in power or in size, of Seleucia on the Tigris or Alexandria in Egypt'. Three hundred years later Libanius, himself an Antiochean, refers to the city as 'the metropolis of Asia', see *Or.* 11.130, 187. See also below, with n. 33.

²⁵ Butcher 2003, 332, see also 270–77. Cf. Marrou 1964, vol. 2, 51–52, 122–23; Sartre 2005, 275–91.

may throw light on the transmission of the text of Homer.²⁶ As to the more general question of the degree to which such extrapolation from the early Christian to the Hellenic manuscript tradition would be methodologically valid, I suggest, together with Harry Gamble, that in cases such as this the lack of information should be compensated by the evidence supplied by the larger social context:

Yet no differentiating features of early Christianity require us to think that the publication and circulation of early Christian texts proceeded along unique or idiosyncratic lines. Without evidence to the contrary, it ought to be supposed that Christian writings were produced and disseminated in much the same way as other literature within the larger environment.²⁷

I suggest that the Homerists should in turn watch closely the early Christian manuscript tradition, if only for the reason that eventually both the text of the New Testament and that of Homer emerge as Byzantine Imperial Texts, produced in the same scriptoria and treasured in the same libraries. This draws our attention again to the two major centres of learning that sustained their position since the Hellenistic period—Alexandria and Antioch.

3 Regional into dominant

The fourth century CE was one of the most significant periods in the history of books in the Greek-speaking world. To begin with, it saw some major shifts in the technology of book production. Parchment took over from papyrus, the papyrus scrolls were transferred to codices, and the copies came to be made by state-paid scribes. Changes in the political sphere were no less impressive. In 330 CE, the seat of government was transferred to Constantinople. The importance of this fact

26 See Allen 1931, 196 n. 1: ‘A certain parallel may be found in the medieval text of the Greek Scriptures. This, known as the Byzantine text, survived, to the almost complete extinction of the other versions, owing to political and geographical circumstances, viz. the Saracenic conquest of Egypt, and the decay of Greek in the West’. As we shall see, although the Arab conquest of Egypt undoubtedly contributed to the isolation of Alexandria from the rest of the Greek-speaking world, it was far from being the decisive factor that marginalized the Alexandrian recension of the New Testament.

27 Gamble 1995, 93–94. Cf. *ibid.* 82–83: ‘Any item of early Christian literature is available to us only in consequence of a long process of transmission. Given our indebtedness to that process, it is easy to forget that the transmission of a text over time is but an accidental function of its currency in its own time—of the extent to which it was duplicated, distributed, and used soon after it was composed... Since early Christian sources shed little direct light on these issues, we must again attend to the larger context and ask first how non-Christian Greek and Latin literature was published and circulated during the early centuries of the church’.

for the history of books is hard to overestimate, for a single city was to become, for the first time in history, the central religious, cultural and educational authority for the entire Greek-speaking world. The foundation of Constantinople was accompanied by a considerable increase in the civil service: government required greater numbers of administrators of liberal education and a good prose style. In 353, Constantius II issued an edict encouraging liberal education; four years later, he founded in Constantinople an imperial library of secular books transcribed by professional scribes working at the imperial expense. That this library was the object of considerable care on the part of the Christian rulers of the Eastern Empire follows from the fact that in 372 Valens ordered the employment of seven copyists to maintain and repair the books. Since, as we have seen, there had been several centres of learning and book production in the Greek-speaking world, each issuing its own texts, it is evident that the choice of one recension of a given text over another for the imperial library and scriptorium was crucial for its survival. Again, this is best illustrated by the history of the Christian texts.

As Jerome (ca. 347–420) makes clear, towards the end of the fourth century the circulation areas of the Greek Old Testament texts closely corresponded to the geographical distribution of the major scriptoria. Hesychius was known as the editor of the text used in Alexandria and Egypt, while ‘in Constantinople and as far as Antioch copies made by the martyr Lucian are regarded as authoritative; the provinces between these two read the Palestinian manuscripts prepared by Origen and widely promoted by Eusebius and Pamphylus’.²⁸ Kurt and Barbara Aland remark on this as follows:

Thus Jerome mentions three major types of text for the Greek Old Testament, and his statement confirms the view expressed above that these types ... survived because they were the texts of the great scriptoria (of Alexandria, Caesarea, and the episcopal sees from Antioch to Constantinople, i.e., the Antiochene school), and consequently circulated almost exclusively.²⁹

As this evidence demonstrates, it is the Antiochene text of the Greek Old Testament that was regarded as authoritative in Constantinople; as we saw above, this was true of the text of the New Testament as well.³⁰ When in the seventh century

²⁸ Hieron. *praef. in Paralip.* Transl Aland and Aland.

²⁹ Aland and Aland 1989, 66. Cf. Allen 1924, 314–20.

³⁰ Cf. Vaganay 1991, 126: ‘This period saw the triumph of the Byzantine text, otherwise known as the ecclesiastical or imperial text. The name is of little importance but the fact of the predominance of this form of the text is striking. It developed from the Antiochene recension and dominated the whole of the Greek-speaking East’. Cf. Kenyon 1958, 169–78; Aland and Aland 1989, 55

the Arabs conquered and destroyed both Antioch and Alexandria, this event affected only the Alexandrian recension of the New Testament, which became much less widespread.³¹ The reason is clear: by the very fact of choosing the Antiochene text several centuries earlier, the Constantinople authorities had determined its survival even when Antioch itself ceased to be part of the empire.³²

What can all this tell us of the history of the text of Homer? We saw that Antioch had a royal library since the Hellenistic period, and that this library, like those of the other Hellenistic kingdoms, must have possessed its own text of Homer. The recension of the *Iliad* commissioned by Antiochus I from Aratus comes to mind in this connection. It is immaterial for our purposes whether or not it was Aratus' recension that eventually became the Seleucid state text of Homer: what matters is the king's intention to produce such a text. We also saw that, as far as the Greek Old Testament and New Testament texts are concerned, the Constantinople authorities consistently preferred Antioch (or, sometimes, Caesarea, see above, n. 30) over Alexandria, and that in terms of the regional circulation of books Constantinople and Antioch belonged to the same region. Finally, as Libanius amply demonstrates, in the fourth century—that is, in the time of the consolidation of the Antiochene recension of the New Testament—the citizens of Antioch continued to found schools of secular learning and the city sustained its position as the centre of 'Hellenic *paideia*'.³³ This circumstantial evidence is of course insufficient in itself to allow the unequivocal conclusion that

(quoted above, with n. 14). According to Aland and Aland, despite the fact that in 332 Constantine ordered from Eusebius of Caesarea fifty parchment copies of the New Testament for use in the churches of Constantinople, it is far from certain that Caesarea developed its own distinctive New Testament text alongside those of Alexandria and Antioch (*ibid.* 66). For a different opinion see Vaganay (below, with n. 41).

31 Antioch was reconquered by the Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas in 969, only to be lost again in 1085, this time to the Seljuk Turks. Thirteen years later, it was taken by the Crusaders, and remained in their hands till its capture by the Mamluks in 1268.

32 Cf. Kenyon 1958, 174: 'The subsequent acceptance of the Antiochian or Syrian type as the received text of the Greek New Testament must have been due to the predominant influence of Constantinople'.

33 See esp. *Or.* 11. 188.8–10 'You [the citizens of Antioch]... have been lavish in building temples of the Muses [sc. schoolrooms] for students to attend, and as a reward to the goddesses, and you both employ citizens and hold no grudge against foreigners as teachers' and 270.6–9 'Moreover, if she [Antioch] be inferior to any in respect of her walls, she yet surpasses that town [sc. Constantinople] ... both in the wit of her inhabitants and in the pursuit of philosophy, and she rises superior to the city still greater [sc. Rome] in the most noble feature of all, in Greek education and oratory (Ἑλληνικῇ παιδείᾳ καὶ λόγοις). Transl. A.F. Norman, slightly changed. See also Wilson 1983, 28–30.

it was the Antiochene rather than some other regional text of Homer that made its way to Constantinople, eventually to become the Byzantine Imperial Text. Yet, given the scarcity of Alexandrian readings in the medieval vulgate, the available evidence seems to explain satisfactorily enough why it was some other recension of Homer rather than an Alexandrian one that eventually became the standard text of the Byzantine Empire.³⁴

This conclusion, however, demands certain qualifications. First, in both the Hellenistic and the Roman periods there was much interchange between scholars working at different centres of learning. As we saw, Aristarchus reacted to the critical methods of Crates and the readings he introduced, which surely indicates that these two scholars were aware of each other's work (above, with n. 20). It is true that Aristophanes of Byzantium is said to have been imprisoned in Alexandria and thus prevented from accepting the invitation from Pergamum, but we saw that Aratus, for one, moved freely between Pella and Antioch, and the same was probably true of other scholars.³⁵ The *secessio doctorum*, Ptolemy VIII's exiling of Aristarchus and his pupils from Alexandria (see above), seems to have especially contributed to the spread of Alexandrian scholarship over the Hellenistic world.³⁶ In view of this, it is reasonable to suppose that Alexandrian texts of Homer, and especially the one produced by Aristarchus, continued to be consulted in Egypt and elsewhere during the Roman period as well: this was probably one of the ways by which Alexandrian readings entered the medieval vulgate.³⁷

Second, it should be kept in mind that the general assumption concerning the transliteration of books set off by the transition from uncial to minuscule writing in the ninth century CE, namely, that one minuscule copy was made from one uncial copy and became the source of all subsequent copies, does not apply to texts that were in especially great demand: as far as the texts that enjoyed a firm position in the Byzantine school curriculum are concerned, it was often more than one uncial manuscript that became transliterated.³⁸ This would of course be

34 Cf. Allen 1924, 324: 'Alexandria naturally continued to produce books ... but it had never a monopoly for which nothing but the indigenous papyrus fitted it'. With Arthur Ludwich, Allen was among the few scholars who paid attention to the historical context of the consolidation of the vulgate text of Homer. Both emphasized that, rather than to the activity of the philologists, the uniformity of the medieval vulgate was due to the conditions of publication, which eventually led to the survival of one recension of Homer over the others.

35 On Aristophanes see Pfeiffer 1968, 172, on Aratus see above, n. 16.

36 Cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 253.

37 See Allen 1931, 85; 209–16; Apthorp 1980, 9; Janko 1992; Haslam 1997, 94–95.

38 See further Reynolds and Wilson 1968, 52–53; Haslam 1997, 89.

especially true in the case of Homer.³⁹ Since it is thus highly likely that more than a single manuscript of the Homeric poems was transcribed into minuscule writing at the end of the first millennium CE,⁴⁰ we cannot exclude the possibility that an Alexandrian text of Homer was one of them. Yet, as the example of the New Testament manuscript tradition demonstrates, although copies of other recensions of the New Testament continued to be produced here and there, they were as a rule made to conform to the dominant Syro-Byzantine text and were contaminated by its influence. Leon Vaganay's assessment of the relevant evidence appears to be in place here:

Generally speaking, the Alexandrian recension, which had not been very widespread since the Arab conquest (seventh century), is not common... The Caesarean recension has more witnesses but they are almost all contaminated by a Byzantine influence... Some other groups are so disfigured that they seem to represent the Syro-Byzantine text slightly corrected with Caesarean variants.⁴¹

If we take into account that the medieval tradition of the Homeric poems has also proved to be heavily contaminated,⁴² it would be reasonable to suppose that in their case, too, the situation could not be much different. Again, this does not mean that the Alexandrian recension disappeared without trace. Yet, although it is likely that it influenced the dominant text in many and various ways, the state of the latter repeatedly demonstrates that it was not an Alexandrian text of Homer that formed the basis of the one we have.⁴³ I hope that the above appraisal of the social and historical context to which it originally belonged shows clearly enough that we should hardly be surprised at this outcome.

39 On the privileged position of Homer in the Byzantine school curriculum see, e.g., Reynolds and Wilson 1968, 55; Browning 1992, 136.

40 See Haslam 1997, 92–93.

41 Vaganay 1991, 127.

42 See Haslam 1997, 89–95, for a balanced assessment.

43 Cf. Kenyon 1958, 171, on the text of the New Testament: 'The Alexandrian text is represented, not so much by any individual MS. or version, as by certain readings found scattered about in manuscripts which elsewhere belong to one of the other groups'.

30 Canonizing and Decanonizing Homer: Reception of the Homeric Poems in Antiquity and Modernity

Although it is generally taken for granted that in antiquity the Homeric poems enjoyed the status of canonical texts, their canonicity is usually approached in terms of the Greek literary canon. It seems to me, however, that it would be incorrect to treat Homer's canonicity as being of the same order as the canonicity of, say, Euripides. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* functioned in antiquity not merely as literary texts, but as literary texts that were highly privileged in the civilisation to which they belonged—in this respect, their status was closer to the status of the Bible and similar ancient corpora than to that of other works of literature produced in ancient Greece.¹ As I argue in this chapter, the reason why this attitude did not last into the modern period is that, in the case of Homer, we should speak of two reception histories rather than one.

1

Let me start by outlining the reasons why I believe that it would be more profitable to approach Homer's status in antiquity against the background of canonical texts of other civilisations rather than that of the ancient Greek literary canon. The points to which I am about to refer stem from the results of the comparative study of canonical texts carried out by the research group on Mechanisms of Canon-Making in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Societies, which was active at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Jerusalem, in 1999–2000. In the course of our attempts to find a common denominator that would allow us to overcome the split between the 'literary' and the 'religious' canons, it was proposed that we use the term 'foundational texts', which would embrace both Homer and the Bible (i.e. both the Hebrew scriptures and the Christian Bible). The all-inclusive character of such texts, namely the fact that they address the entire community rather than a specific section of it, helps us to draw a distinction between different categories of canonicity. Indeed, not only Homer and the Bible, but also some literary corpora, codices of law, philosophical or mystical texts

¹ Cf. Long 1992, 44: 'Throughout classical antiquity and well into the Roman Empire, Homer held a position in Mediterranean culture that can only be compared with the position the Bible would later occupy'. See also above, ch. 27, 326–30.

privileged by exclusive groups of the initiated, are often referred to as 'canonical'; yet, while the latter are characterized by different degrees of social, ethnic, or religious exclusivity, only the former are envisaged as universally applicable vis-à-vis the community as a whole. The result of our work has been, among other things, to highlight the fact that there are two categories of canonicity rather than one: a stronger canonicity as embodied in foundational texts and a weaker one represented by various cultural sub-canons, the literary canon being the most obvious example. It goes without saying that despite the literary nature of his text, Homer belongs to the former category.

To be elevated to the status of a foundational text, a text should meet the following criteria: (1) it should occupy the central place in education; (2) it should be the focus of exegetic activity aimed at defending it from any form of criticism; (3) it should be the vehicle by which the identity of the community to which it belongs is articulated. I shall address these points one by one.

(1) Occupying the central place in education has proven to be one of the salient characteristics of foundational texts. There is no need to dwell upon the role of the study of Torah at every level of Jewish education. Suffice to say that Homer's role in Greek education was not dissimilar. To quote the *Scribes and Scholars* by L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, 'the [Homeric] epics enjoyed an inviolable position in the school curriculum which put them in a class apart from all other poetry'.² Plato's iconoclastic attempts to transform Greek education by supplanting the authority of Homer with that of the philosophers left no lasting impression, and the educational reforms he proposed were overshadowed by those of Isocrates (436–338 BCE), who built on the foundations laid by the traditional *paideia*.³

Starting with elementary school, Homeric poems were the primary object of study at every stage of education; indeed, it was the very text through which children in the Hellenic world learned to read. But Homer was also the focus of attention in the grammatical schools, which formed the first level of higher education, and in the rhetorical schools, its second and highest level. Small wonder, then, that no less than a thousand papyri containing segments of the Homeric poems, first and foremost the *Iliad*, have been unearthed in the sands of Egypt, which amounts to ten times the number of papyri with texts by Euripides, the next most favoured author. Among these, about one hundred are the so-called school-texts,

² Reynolds and Wilson 1968, 55. See also Wilson 1983, 18–27, 67; Browning 1992, 136.

³ Cf. Marrou 1964, 128: 'It was Isocrates, not Plato, who became the educator of the fourth-century Greece and, after that, of the Hellenistic and then the Roman world'. My translation.

with Euripides, again, coming second with twenty texts to his credit. The dominant position of Homer in Greek education is further corroborated in the vast number of Homeric quotations found in ancient authors.⁴

The medieval manuscripts exhibit a similar picture. In spite of the acrimonious criticism of early Christian apologists, the transition to Christianity did not affect the position of the Homeric poems in the system of education, and the *Iliad*, side by side with the Psalms, served as the principal school-text up to the end of the Eastern empire.⁵ Our text of Homer originates in the Byzantine manuscript tradition (the so-called medieval vulgate), which was fixed once and for all in the course of the transliteration of books triggered by the transition from uncial to minuscule writing in the ninth-tenth centuries CE. As is often emphasised, this event had a bottleneck effect on the manuscripts that had circulated in the Greek-speaking world.⁶ Yet the general assumption concerning the transliteration of books, namely, that one minuscule copy was made from one uncial copy and became the source of all subsequent copies of a given text, does not apply to Homer. There is little doubt that more than a single manuscript of the Homeric poems was transcribed into minuscule writing at the end of the first millennium CE.⁷ Just as in the case of the papyri, this was due to the fact that the Homeric poems occupied a place of honour in the Byzantine school curriculum.

(2) Another distinctive feature of the texts that are canonical in the strong sense of the word is the hermeneutical attitude developed towards them within the community to which they belong. To use the terminology introduced by Moshe Halbertal, in order to produce the best possible reading of such texts, the ‘principle of charity’ is adopted:

In the case of the Scriptures, there is an a priori interpretative commitment to show the text in the best possible light. Conversely, the loss of this sense of obligation to the text is an undeniable sign that it is no longer perceived as holy. Making use of the principle of charity, the following principle can be stipulated: the degree of canonicity of a text corresponds to the amount of charity it receives in its interpretation. The more canonical a text, the more generous its treatment.⁸

⁴ On Homer’s place in education see esp. Marrou 1964, 244–245; Wilson 1983, 18–19; Haslam 1997, 60–61; Morgan 1998, 69, 105; Cribiore 2001, 140–42, 194–97; Morgan 2011.

⁵ On early Christian reception of Homer see now Kaldellis 2011; on Homer in education see the previous note.

⁶ See, e.g., Reynolds and Wilson 1968, 51–52; Wilson 1983, 65–68, and above, ch. 29, 351–52.

⁷ Haslam 1997, 92–93.

⁸ Halbertal 1997, 29; on ‘the best possible reading’ see *ibid.* 32–33 (quoted above, 327 n. 27).

This would be equally true both of the interpretation of the Bible in Jewish exegetic tradition and, *mutatis mutandis*, of the interpretation of Homer in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods.

The beliefs and values that initially informed the Homeric poems altered considerably in the course of time. The Homeric religion especially, with its too human-like and human-behaving gods, soon began to be felt inadequate by many. Already in the sixth century BCE the philosopher Xenophanes accused Homer and Hesiod of having attributed to the gods ‘everything that is a shame and reproach among men’, and Plato’s attack on Homer in the *Republic* was very much in the same vein. Plato was also first to actually recommend the systematic censoring of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁹ Yet, the rival claims of the philosophers had not been endorsed by the community as a whole, and their attempts to decanonize Homer ended in total failure (see also above, on education). It was by interpreting the standard text of the Homeric poems rather than by interfering with it that Homer’s adaptation to changing circumstances normally proceeded.

This was mainly achieved by means of allegorical interpretation. This widespread exegetical method, eagerly embraced later by early Christian and then by early modern interpreters, was first applied to Homer as early as the sixth century BCE.¹⁰ Theagenes of Rhegium (6th century BCE) approached the Battle of the Gods, the Theomachy of *Iliad* 20 and 21, in terms of a conflict of physical and cosmic elements. Metrodorus of Lampsacus (5th century BCE) interpreted the whole of the *Iliad* in the vein of the cosmological doctrine of the philosopher Anaxagoras. A similar approach was also favoured by the early Stoics, who developed sophisticated ways of identifying the gods of Homer and Hesiod with cosmic elements and forces. The Neoplatonist allegorization of Homer, which openly aimed at defending the poet against Plato’s criticisms, began to appear in the first centuries CE and reached its climax in the fifth century, in the work of Proclus.¹¹

Another way to obtain ‘the best possible reading’, closely connected with allegory but not identical with it, was to update Homer by reading into his text the scientific and practical knowledge that accumulated in later epochs. The Stoics

⁹ Xenophanes 21 B 11 DK (cf. also 21 B 1. 19–23); Pl. *Resp.* 607a, 398d–400d. Cf. above, ch. 27, 326.

¹⁰ See Struck 2004, 18: ‘[W]ith the discovery of the Derveni papyrus some decades ago, alongside the fragments of other famous allegorists from the classical period, we have indication enough that allegoresis forms a more or less continuous strand of literary thinking through the classical, Hellenistic, and early- and late-Roman periods’. See also Finkelberg 2014 and above, ch. 27, 327.

¹¹ On Neoplatonist interpretation see Lamberton 1992 and 2011; on Stoic interpretation see Porter 2011; on allegorical interpretation in general see Struck 2011.

especially were notorious for their attempts to turn Homer into an advanced astronomer and geographer.¹² Strabo's polemics against Eratosthenes (275–194 BCE), the initiator of another failed attempt to decanonize Homer, was in a similar vein. In spite of the fact that Eratosthenes' rationalistic criticism of Homer's geographical competence, anticipating in more than one respect the Enlightenment criticism of the Bible, was sensible enough, Strabo (ca. 64 BCE – 23 CE) did his best to adjust Homer's picture of the world to the geographical horizons of Augustan Rome.¹³ The same strategy permeates the influential *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* (2nd century CE), a compendious treatment of the Homeric poems as the ultimate source of all knowledge, once believed to be authored by Plutarch.¹⁴

Simultaneously, various strategies of guiding students towards what was seen by their tutors as the appropriate reading were developed in schools. Plutarch's *How Young Men Should Study Poetry* supplies detailed instructions of how one should extract from the text of Homer and other early poets the meaning which would suit moral, political and religious sensibilities of the second century CE.¹⁵ The same interpretative strategies were later applied by Christian educators, having thus made it possible to retain Homer's central place in the school curriculum until the end of Byzantium.¹⁶ It is not difficult to discern that both allegorical interpretation and the retroactive updating of the Homeric poems are in fact different aspects of the same interpretative strategy aimed at protecting the canonical text in order to keep its authority untouched.¹⁷

(3) Finally, in that they embody the essentials of a given community's self-consciousness, the foundational texts are one of the principal factors by which the ethnic, cultural, or religious identity of the community in question is articulated. Again, this would be true not only of the Hebrew and the Greek Bible, the Avesta, or the Qur'an, but also of the poems of Homer. 'Like the Bible for the Jews, Homer offered the Greeks the foundation of their cultural identity'.¹⁸

¹² Cf. above, ch. 27, 327–28, and ch. 28.

¹³ Strab. 7.3.6–10, pp. 298–303. On Strabo and Homer see Dueck 2000, 31–40 and Dueck 2011.

¹⁴ Hillgruber 1994–1999; Keaney and Lamberton 1996. Cf. Hillgruber 2011.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Plutarch, *Mor.* 24C–E or 27A–B and above, ch. 27, 328–29.

¹⁶ See esp. St Basil, *Ad adulescentes*, 1.5; 5.6; 4.1–2; 4.4.

¹⁷ Cf. Long 1992, 44: 'Such texts [the Bible and Homer], however, can only remain authoritative over centuries of social and conceptual change if they can be brought up to date, so to speak—I mean they must be capable of being given interpretations that suit the circumstances of different epochs'. For discussion see Finkelberg 2014.

¹⁸ Long 1992, 44. See also above, ch. 27, 330.

Over two millennia, from the emergence of historic Greece in the eighth century BCE up to the dissolution of Byzantium in the fifteenth century CE, the Homeric poems acted as the privileged text of Greek civilisation. The case of the Christian state of Byzantium seems to be especially illuminating. Just as their pagan forefathers, the Byzantines not only saw the Homeric poems as essential to the education of their children but they also perpetuated the pagan Hellenic tradition of studying and interpreting the text of Homer. The reason for this unique symbiosis of Homer with the Bible is obvious: the Byzantines regarded themselves as both Christians and Greeks, and Homer was perceived as an integral component of their national identity thus understood. It is not by mere chance, then, that it was the Byzantines who bequeathed the text of the Homeric poems to modernity.

2

Playing the key role in education; being read according to the principle of charity; being instrumental in consolidating collective identity are, then, the three conditions that I consider necessary and sufficient to identify a given text as canonical in the strong sense. These conditions ceased to exist when, with the fall of Byzantium, no self-sustained community remained whose identity could be perpetuated by means of Homer.

In the Latin West, since the Age of Augustus Rome had seen Virgil's *Aeneid*, which both imitated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and emulated them, as its own national epic that answered its educational and ideological needs much more adequately than the Homeric poems.¹⁹ Moreover, with the rise of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, when the tradition of the Trojan origins of Rome and its rulers had become the dominant one, the Trojan saga underwent a radical re-interpretation. As a result, the Greek participants in the Trojan War came to be seen in a negative light—so much so that Dio of Prusa (ca. 40 CE – ca. 115 CE) could afford, in his *Trojan Oration*, to represent Homer as a liar and the Trojans as the victors in the Trojan War. According to the *Trojan Oration*, Troy had never been sacked by the Greeks: in fact, it is the Greeks who had lost the war because of their unprovoked attack on Troy. Dio repeatedly praises the Trojans (read: Romans) and elevates Aeneas, a hero virtually ignored by other Greek authors. Even if the speech was meant as a rhetorical exercise rather than a serious treatment of the Trojan theme,

¹⁹ On Roman reception of Homer's narrative of the Trojan War see Erskine 2001; Finkelberg 2020.

Dio's pro-Roman stance is unmistakable, and it is made explicit at the end of the oration, when he asserts that the truth about the Trojan War can now be told because 'the situation has changed... for Greece is subject to others and so is Asia'.²⁰

The *Trojan Oration* was part of a trend.²¹ The latter produced not only such acknowledged masterpieces as Lucian's *True Stories* and Philostratus' *Heroicus* but also two accounts of the Trojan War written in Greek prose somewhere between the first and the third centuries CE: the *History of the Destruction of Troy* by 'Dares the Phrygian' and the *Journal of the Trojan War* by 'Dictys of Crete'. Although far from masterpieces, these two compositions were to become the foremost sources on the Trojan War for a millennium and a half. Both are presented as eyewitness accounts, and therefore as far superior to Homer. The image of the Greek participants that they communicate, although not invariably negative, is far from flattering.²² But it is the Latin translations of Dictys and Dares, apparently made in the fourth and fifth centuries CE, that became overwhelmingly influential in the subsequent centuries. It is true of course that such post-Augustan epics as Statius' *Achilleid* (96 CE) and the *Posthomerica* by Quintus of Smyrna (4th century CE) displayed an attitude to the Trojan War that did not essentially differ from the tradition bequeathed by Homer. Yet, in the late antique, medieval, and early modern West it was Dictys and Dares rather than Statius and Quintus who became, as one scholar put it, 'the foundational texts of Trojan historiography'.²³

The new vision of the Trojan War as proclaimed by Dio and promulgated by Dictys and Dares could hardly have met with such wide acceptance were it not for Virgil's *Aeneid* and the myth of Trojan ancestry of the Romans that it advanced. Now the myth of Trojan ancestry, although greatly enhanced by Virgil, was not invented by him: the identification with the Trojans had begun centuries earlier, at the very dawn of Roman history. What Virgil did, and what was accepted with enthusiasm, was the introduction of the idea of the superiority of Rome, as represented by its antecedent Troy, over Greece (see, e.g., *Aen.* 6.489–93). Thus, although he never called Homer a liar or reversed the story line fixed in the Homeric poems, Virgil accomplished a thorough revision of the attitude to the Trojan conflict bestowed by Homer. Virgil's version of the Trojan War was not merely popular: it became so authoritative as to outlive the Roman Empire itself.²⁴

²⁰ *Orationes* 11.150.

²¹ See Merkle 1996, 578–79; Zeitlin 2001; Kim 2010, 179–81; Whitmarsh 2010, 398–99.

²² See further King 1987, 140–41; Merkle 1996.

²³ Patterson 1991, 114.

²⁴ On foundational myths of the Trojan origins of numerous West European peoples, states and dynasties as 'quite remarkably Virgilian' see esp. Waswo 1995, 272; see also Patterson 1991, 90, 114. For discussion see Finkelberg 2020.

The *Aeneid* continued to be read, admired and imitated throughout the Latin Middle Ages and beyond. Homer, on the other hand, was no longer available. For Dante (1265–1321), he was still ‘Homer, the sovereign poet’ (*Omero poeta sovrano*), but Dante never had the opportunity to read the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. The first modern translation of Homer, into Latin prose, was made by Leontius Pilatus (d. 1364) several decades after Dante’s death. And even when the humanists re-introduced Greek into Western Europe, it was on the New Testament rather than on Homer that their Hellenic studies were mainly focused.²⁵ The true modern reception of Homer began only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the appearance of the first translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into modern languages.

It is generally recognized today that every act of reading is culturally conditioned, in that it involves an implicit agreement, shared by the members of the community, about what a given text is supposed to deliver. This agreement is communicated through cultural codes that encapsulate what Wolfgang Iser has defined as ‘contractual terms between author and reader’, thus signalling the way in which the text is to be approached.²⁶ By the time of the appearance of the first modern translations of the Homeric epics, the contractual terms according to which they had been read in the ancient world were irrevocably lost. For the Western cultural tradition, heavily imbued with Virgil and Latin poetry in general, Homer was an acquired taste, and not an effortlessly acquired one at that. This can be observed in the humanists’ embarrassment upon first encountering Homer, an embarrassment that gradually evolved into open rejection, as apparent in J.C. Scaliger’s (1484–1558) famous condemnation of Homer as rude, primitive, and vulgar.²⁷

The problematic position of Homer within Western tradition was brought to the fore at the end of the 17th / start of the 18th century when the Homeric poems, and especially the *Iliad*, found themselves the focus of a great controversy over the cultural canon. I mean the so-called *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, dubbed in English by Jonathan Swift ‘The Battle of the Books’.²⁸ Two questions were of especial importance for the *Querelle*. One, which issued from the accumulation of scientific knowledge, concerned the superiority of the modern age

²⁵ Pfeiffer 1976, 76; cf. Finkelberg 2014. On the history of the humanist reception of Homer see Sowerby 1997 and below, with n. 27.

²⁶ Iser 1993, 11–12.

²⁷ Cf. Sowerby 1997, 37: ‘A taste for and appreciation of the distinctively Homeric were not a part of the rich legacy bequeathed to modern Europe by the early humanists’. On Scaliger see *ibid.* 179–80.

²⁸ In the subsequent discussion of the *Querelle*, I am heavily indebted to DeJean 1997.

over antiquity as far as the natural sciences were concerned; the other, often presented as supplementary to the former but in fact pertaining to the core of the debate, concerned literature and arts. The argument in favour of the superiority of modern science originated in the efforts of Descartes and Bacon to make their contemporaries adopt the new methods of scientific inquiry. Both rejected the authority of the ancients in the matters of science, but Descartes and his followers also refused to draw a distinction between science and philosophy on the one hand and literature and art on the other, pouring scorn on the legacy of Greece and Rome in both areas. The first to come under attack was Aristotle, whose authority as scientist and philosopher had been seriously undermined. Homer came next. It seems that Homer's critics presumed that if they managed to overthrow that cultural icon, the superiority of the modern age over antiquity would be proven once and for all. In this ambitious project to decanonize Homer, the absence of contractual terms, which might well have procured a more charitable reading of his poems, served as the Moderns' most powerful tool.²⁹

It should be taken into account in this connection that shortly before the events of the *Querelle*, abbé François d'Aubignac (1604–1676) started circulating a critical essay in which he argued that Homer's style, the plots of his poems and his characters were below standard, while his morality and theology were simply abominable. But there was more in d'Aubignac's essay than just disparagement of Homer's morals and of the literary merit of his poems. Homer, d'Aubignac claimed, could not serve as a model of poetry for the simple reason that no-one named 'Homer' had ever existed. The poems transmitted under Homer's name were nothing more than a collection of disparate lays. D'Aubignac's manuscript, which was published only after his death, was widely known at the time, and the Moderns' attack on Homer should be read against this background.

The poem *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand* read by Charles Perrault before the *Académie Française* on the 22nd January 1687, which extolled the scientific achievements of the modern age and attacked Aristotle and Homer, launched seven years of bitter controversy, which officially ended in 1694. But the conflict was resumed in 1711 with the publication of a translation of the *Iliad* by Anne Dacier Lefèvre, the first woman scholar in the history of Homeric studies. Madame Dacier's Introduction was an open challenge to the Moderns. Like the other Ancients, she tried to re-canonize Homer by adopting an apologetic stance not

²⁹ Cf. Halbertal 1997, 40: 'Texts are given readings varying from a minimal degree of charity, which implies the effort to make sense, to the extreme charity that is typical of the reading of canonized texts. Loss of charity in its primary sense is a form of decanonization of the text.'

dissimilar to that of Homer's ancient interpreters. Approaching Homer with timeless standards of truth and beauty, she regarded his poems as the embodiment of every possible virtue and the model of literary perfection.

It did not take long before the reaction of the Moderns was heard. It was again a translation—or, to be more precise, an adaptation—of the *Iliad* by Antoine Houdar de La Motte, published in 1714. La Motte's Introduction propelled the debate to a new level. In addition to reiterating the arguments already made by d'Aubignac and Perrault, La Motte claimed that it was necessary to apply to Homer the judgement of reason. According to La Motte, the pleasure aroused by Homer was based on the new literary experience to which readers found themselves exposed, their interest in antiquities, respect for authority, and prejudice. None of these stemmed from reason, the only criterion on which aesthetic judgement should be based. La Motte admitted that it would be unfair to censure Homer for lack of harmony with later and 'more noble' epochs. Yet, he insisted that the Moderns were fully justified in criticizing Homer's age for its barbaric mores and in pointing out that the picture of this age painted in the *Iliad* does not fit the much more refined standards of the modern time.

The last significant contribution to the *Querelle* was made by abbé Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, whose book *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting* was published in 1719. Like his younger contemporary Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), Du Bos was among those eighteenth-century intellectuals who had gradually freed themselves of the influence of Descartes. This is why Du Bos, for whom heart rather than reason was the supreme judge of the beautiful, strove to separate literature and art from science and philosophy. He saw only too clearly the essential difference between basic knowledge founded on fact and experience and knowledge founded on heart and imagination, as enshrined in poetry, history, rhetoric, and morality. Du Bos is not sympathetic to the prejudice that causes people to prefer their own age and country, and he is ready to forgive Homer his flaws, for they belong not to the poet himself but to his age. At the same time, like the other Moderns, Du Bos saw the standards of his own age as universally valid. This is why, even if he had no doubt that Homer's great merit was to bring pleasure and supply knowledge about the conditions of life in his age, eventually he could only pity Homer for his primitive and ignorant ways.

It is hardly by accident that Vico started formulating his ideas on Homer in 1722, in close proximity to the events of the *Querelle*.³⁰ In 1730, he was already prepared to dedicate a chapter to Homer in the second edition of *La scienza nuova*. The expanded version of this chapter, entitled 'On the discovery of the true

30 On Vico and the *Querelle* see Levine 1991.

Homer', appeared in the third, standard edition of the book. It is, however, highly symptomatic that, sympathetic as Vico certainly was towards Homer, his literary taste actually did not differ from that of the Moderns. Consider for example the following:

Not wisely behaved was he who aroused in the hearts of the vulgar crowd the feeling of pleasure stirred by the coarse actions of gods and heroes, as for example when we read [in the *Iliad*] of how, in the middle of the strife [of the gods], Mars calls Minerva a 'dogfly' [21.394] and Minerva punches Diana [21.424], whereas Achilles and Agamemnon, one the greatest of the Greek heroes and the other the leader of the Greek league, call each other a 'dog' [1. 225], the name that in our times would barely appear on the lips of servants in the comedy.³¹

At the same time, Vico's position is much more nuanced than the position of the Moderns. On the one hand, he agrees with the Moderns that Homer was a primitive who lived in a barbaric age and depicted a society whose beliefs and values were no longer valid or acceptable. On the other hand, he adopts the claim of the Ancients that Homer was a supreme poet: he is just not ready to see him either as the source of philosophical wisdom or as the spiritual leader of modernity. He agrees with d'Aubignac that Homer the man never existed, but at the same time sees the entire Greek people as the true author of the Homeric epics. But above all Vico differs from both the Ancients and the Moderns in the new approach he developed. Contrary to the Ancients' uncritical belief in an unchanging human nature and from the Moderns' anachronistic positioning of their own times as the absolute standard of aesthetic judgement, Vico maintained that each historic period should be treated as a phenomenon *sui generis* and interpreted on the basis of its own criteria.

In view of the aforesaid, it should come as no surprise that the perpetrators of historical method in Homeric studies, such as Richard Bentley (1662–1742) and Robert Wood (1717–1771) in Britain and Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729–1812) and Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) in Germany, approached Homer from the standpoint of the Moderns.³² It was the Moderns, then, who laid the foundations of Homeric studies as a scholarly discipline. The birth of this new discipline signalled the final stage in the decanonization of Homer. It was not merely the fact that Homer became an object of impartial scholarly inquiry that decanonized him once and for all; higher criticism of the Hebrew Bible which started at the same time did not significantly affect its status as a canonical text in the strong sense,

³¹ *La scienza nuova* 782. Third edition. Quoted from Nicolini 1953, 730. My translation.

³² On historical method see also above, ch. 18, 184–85.

at least not in the eyes of true believers. The reason why attempts to re-canonize Homer, like those undertaken by the Ancients of the *Querelle*, were doomed to failure was that, as distinct from the Bible, there remained no community which would educate its young or perpetuate its identity by means of Homer, no 'true believers' who would strive to achieve the best possible reading of the Homeric poems by applying to them the principle of charity. In other words, the Homeric poems no longer met the criteria to which a foundational text would answer.

This is not to say that having ceased to function as a foundational text, Homer was denied any form of canonicity. The radical change in the reading public's taste occasioned by nascent Romanticism at the end of the 18th / start of the 19th century which was closely associated with historical method, granted Homer canonicity of a different order. Together with Shakespeare, he was now universally admired as the embodiment of natural genius, and the *Iliad* became the very text on which German critics, first and foremost Schiller, built their influential theories of the objective and the naïve. From then on, Homer's place in the Western literary canon has been firmly guaranteed.

31 Homer at the Panathenaia: Some possible Scenarios

1

‘It is now more than thirty years’, E.R. Dodds wrote in 1954, ‘since the old logical game of discovering inconsistencies in Homer was replaced in public esteem by the new and equally enjoyable aesthetic game of explaining them away’.¹ Although the specific issue that Dodds had in mind was the shift from the Analyst to the Unitarian approach to Homer that had taken place after World War I, his words equally apply to contemporary Homeric scholarship, in that they underscore the fact that much of what has been going on in Homeric studies—today, in Dodds’ time, and before—concerns alternative assessments of the same corpus of data. This would be particularly true of the scholarly assessment of what might have happened to the Homeric poems in sixth-century BCE Athens.

Raphael Sealey, also writing in the 1950s, presented the situation as follows:

... the student [of the history of the poems in the sixth century Athens] must be grateful to Professors R. Merkelbach and J.A. Davison, who have recently discussed the evidence at length and with contrasting results.²

Sealey refers to the two different assessments of the tradition of the so-called Pisistratean Recension offered by Reinhold Merkelbach and J.A. Davison. According to the tradition in question, the sixth-century BCE Athenian ruler Pisistratus or (more likely) his son and successor Hipparchus initiated the establishment of a standard text of the Homeric poems for the sake of their regulated performance at the recently established Panathenaic festival; according to other sources, the Homeric poems were brought to Athens at the beginning of the sixth century on the initiative of Solon. While Merkelbach defended the tradition of the sixth-century textualization of Homer, Davison rejected it altogether.³

The situation today is not much different. On the one hand, there is a wide consensus among Homeric scholars that the performance of the poems of Homer at the Panathenaic festival, presumably introduced on the initiative of the Pisistratid Hipparchus in 522 BCE, had a pivotal role in the transmission of the poems

1 Dodds 1954, 8.

2 Sealey 1957, 342.

3 Merkelbach 1952; Davison 1955. On the tradition of the Pisistratean Recension see Andersen 2011 (with bibliography) and above, ch. 25.

of Homer.⁴ This would be true both of those scholars who, as Albio Cesare Cassio, do not associate the textualization of Homer with the establishment of the Panathenaic performance,⁵ and those who, as Gregory Nagy, see the sixth-century Athenian text as only an intermediate stage on the way to the Homeric poems assuming of their final form.⁶

Beyond this basic consensus, however, the opinions as to the impact of the establishment of the Panathenaic performance on the text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* differ just as radically as sixty years ago. While some scholars do associate the standardization of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with sixth-century Athens, the majority adhere to the standard view as crystallized in the early twentieth century, according to which it should be placed in Ionia in the eighth century BCE.

Contrary to appearances, the two views are not entirely incompatible. As the recent studies of Barbara Graziosi, Douglas Frame and Gregory Nagy have demonstrated, the Panathenaic performance of Homer was a natural successor of the earlier performances at Panionian festivals, such as those at Mycale in Asia Minor or at Delos.⁷ If we also take into account that, upon the conquest of Asia Minor by the Persians, Athens was rapidly gaining the status of the religious, political and cultural centre of the Ionian lands,⁸ rather than two disparate historic moments at which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* might have been fixed, we will have a continuum of epic tradition about the Trojan War which spread with no intermission from archaic Ionia to sixth-century Athens. It is somewhere along this continuum that the Homeric poems as we know them came into being.

We cannot of course be sure that ‘Homer’ performed at the Ionian festivals amounted to our *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but if it did, then the composition of the poems of Homer should have taken place in archaic Ionia: this would concern both the traditional eighth-century dating and the recent tendency of placing the

⁴ For the historical background, see Nagy 2011.

⁵ Cassio 2002, 115: ‘My impression is that Peisistratus and/or the Peisistratids regulated the recitations and gave Homer an unprecedented role in Athenian public life..., but were not responsible for the final composition of the *Iliad*. The same may well be true of the *Odyssey*’.

⁶ Nagy 1996a, 66–67: ‘It is, then, in this era of the tyrants, the Peisistratidai, that we may imagine a plausible historical occasion for the transcription of the Homeric poems in manuscript form’.

⁷ Graziosi 2002; Frame 2009; Nagy 2009. The Panionian festivals were, in turn, preceded (as well as paralleled) by public performances of the Trojan epics in Aeolian regions of Asia Minor, such as Lesbos and the Troad; on the Panaeolian performances see Nagy 2009 II§§272–73.

⁸ See esp. Nagy 2009 I§50, on ‘the new Panionianism of the Peisistratidai of Athens’ as triggered by the Persian occupation of the old Ionian centres.

composition of the *Iliad* in the mid-seventh century BCE and of the *Odyssey* about a generation later (more below). Now, if the Homeric poems had been standardized already at this stage, then the Panathenaic text of Homer could hardly have been much more than a copy of the already established Ionian epics. This is how this scenario is presented by Richard Janko:

The written transcripts were preserved on Chios among the Homeridae. Guilds of rhapsodes performed parts of them from memorization, but the Homeric epics enjoyed only a limited popularity until the time when, in the sixth century, monarchs like Pisistratus, seeking to buttress their own autocratic rule against the claims of the aristocracy, revived and popularized them. The Pisistratids procured a copy in order to regulate the sequence of rhapsodic performances at Athens.⁹

Janko himself places the composition of the *Iliad* in the mid-eighth century, but the model of transmission he proposes would equally apply both to the lower dating in the mid-seventh century¹⁰ and to the higher dating in the ninth century BCE.¹¹

If, on the other hand, it is sixth-century Athens that are to be considered the birthplace of the Homeric poems, then the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* should be attributed to the Ionian bard(s) commissioned to produce a Panathenaic text of Homer. The argument for the sixth-century Homer has been aptly articulated by Keith Stanley:

In the absence of compelling evidence for complete textualization at this early period [i.e. the eighth century BCE], it seems more reasonable to avoid a greater credulity by retaining the possibility of a sixth-century date, especially if the setting were the reorganized Panathenaea, and a stipulation of sequential recitation the incentive for a text that exhibits the complex magnitude and unity of ours. It is under such conditions—rather than at the eighth-century Panionian or Delian festivals—that a fixed sequence of books would be most feasible...¹²

Only few tie-breaking factors have emerged throughout the years. One such factor has been Janko's 1982 monograph on diachronic development in epic diction. Janko's application of statistical methods to the analysis of linguistic phenomena

⁹ Janko 1998, 13; cf. Janko 1992, 29–32.

¹⁰ As e.g. in M. West 2001, 5–9.

¹¹ Powell 1991, 187–220 and Ruijgh 1995; both favour Euboea as the place of composition. On the ninth-century dating see also above, ch. 23.

¹² Stanley 1993, 280. See also Sealey 1957; Jensen 1980; Cook 1995; Nagy 1996, 66–67; Lowenstam 1997 and 2008; Jensen 2011.

resulted in corroboration of the mid-eighth century dating; owing to the methodological rigour and high quality of Janko's research, his conclusions were favourably received and have become widely accepted.¹³ In what follows, I will concentrate on what in my opinion has the potential of becoming a tie-breaking factor pointing in the opposite direction, namely, recent insights into the evidence provided by vase-painting.

2

In recent decades, it has been established beyond doubt that while images evoking the poems of the Epic Cycle had started to appear on the vases from the eighth century BCE, no clearly recognizable Homeric subjects were represented till the late seventh century.¹⁴ This strongly suggests that the circulation of the traditional prototypes of the Cycle poems preceded the circulation of the poems of Homer. Furthermore, since in the Archaic Age the name 'Homer' was applied indiscriminately to the entire epic tradition about the Trojan War, only a few passages in early Greek poetry, none of them predating the late seventh century BCE, can be shown to display a firmly identifiable Homeric influence.

Literary evidence thus concurs with the evidence of art. As Jonathan Burgess put it,

It can be argued that early Greek art and literature both contain some reflexes of Homer, but the possibilities are not numerous and the first probable reflexes date from the end of the seventh century.¹⁵

The verdict issued by Martin West is even more straightforward:

The fact is that there is no clear reflex of the *Iliad* in art before c. 630, or in literature before Alcaeus.¹⁶

This does not mean, of course, that the dates supplied by the vases should be taken as relating to the poems' composition: the evidence of vase-painting con-

¹³ Janko 1982, 228–33; cf. Haslam 1997, Reece 2005; Janko 2012.

¹⁴ See esp. Friis Johansen 1967 (Danish version 1934); Snodgrass 1979; M. West 1995, 207 with n. 21; Lowenstam 1997, 25–27; Snodgrass 1998; Burgess 2001, 35–44, 53–114; Lowenstam 2008; Jensen 2011, 237–44; Burgess 2011 (with bibliography).

¹⁵ Burgess 2001, 127. See also M. West 1995, 206–207; Lowenstam 1997, 58–60.

¹⁶ M. West 2012, 235; cf. M. West 2011c.

cerns the reception, not the composition, of the Homeric poems. Still, the implications of the fact that the knowledge of the Homeric poems did not predate the end of the seventh century are difficult to overestimate. No less illuminating is the conclusion that the Cycle themes became influential well before the Homeric ones.¹⁷

Both the lateness of the first reflexes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Greek art and the fact that they postdate the reflexes of the Cycle poems make the traditional dating of Homer in the mid-eighth century highly problematic. To quote West again,

Of course, this [the evidence of early Greek art] need not mean that the *Iliad* was only composed around 630; but it is very hard to reconcile with the idea that it had been known and admired above all other poems since 730 or 750.¹⁸

Small wonder, therefore, that the evidence of the vases has become one of the main factors owing to which the standard placing of Homer in the mid-eighth century or even earlier has been questioned more than once in recent years.¹⁹

There is, however, an additional aspect to the early iconographical evidence, which has not yet received the attention it deserves. I mean the impact of this evidence on the diachrony of the Homeric tradition itself. The influence of the peculiarly Homeric themes in Attic vase-painting becomes clearly discernible in the early sixth century, well before the regularization of the performance of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* at the Panathenaic festival. Moreover, as Steven Lowenstam showed in the 1990s, the poems that circulated in late archaic and early classical Athens were not necessarily identical to the ones we have. To take only one example, in the depiction of Patroclus' funeral games represented on the François Vase (early sixth century BCE), the names of all but one of the five participants in the chariot race do not correspond to those we find in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, and two of them are not attested at all in our text of Homer (more below). Furthermore, there is good reason to suppose that the same is true of an even earlier depiction of the same games by Sophilos. 'Hence', Lowenstam wrote,

¹⁷ Additional implications of this conclusion are discussed in ch. 18, 193–95.

¹⁸ M. West 1995, 207. The date proposed by West is 660–650 BCE (*ibid.*, 218; cf. M. West 2012, 236). Cf. also the discussion in Lowenstam 1997, 58–67.

¹⁹ See esp. M. West 1995 and henceforth. Cf. Lowenstam 1997, 58–67; Burgess 2001, 49–53; Lowenstam 2008, 7–10. See also Cassio 2002, who arrives at the same conclusion without resorting to the evidence of vase-painting (see below).

the fact that the two painted versions of Patroklos' funeral games differ from the Homeric narrative suggests the currency and influence of variant epic or lyric traditions in the early sixth century.²⁰

This and similar examples of discrepancy between the literary and the iconographical sources are often attributed to the artists' creative independence or, alternately, to their inadequate knowledge of the Homeric poems. Both are of course important factors that should be permanently kept in mind. Yet, neither of them would satisfactorily explain the manner in which Patroclus' funeral games are depicted on the François Vase.

Consider indeed the following. In Homer, the participants in the chariot race are Diomedes (the winner), Antilochus, Menelaus, Meriones, and Eumelus (*Il.* 23.287–616). Yet, the François Vase has Odysseus (the winner), Automedon, Diomedes, Damasippos (non-Homeric) and Hippo[tho]on (non-Homeric) instead. This simple comparison shows that the reason of the discrepancy between the literary and the iconographical representation of the same event is neither the artist's offering an alternative interpretation of the event in question nor his failing to reproduce the 'original' set of the participants and turning to the common stock of Iliadic characters instead. Indeed, while the introduction of both Odysseus and the model charioteer Automedon (who does not take part in the Games as depicted in *Iliad* 23) may still be explained along these lines, it is difficult to say what purpose the emergence of the non-entities Hippothoon and Damasippos was supposed to serve.²¹ The most intriguing element of the depiction of the race is, however, the one that is conspicuous by its absence.

In *Iliad* 23, the major episode of the chariot race and of Patroclus' funeral games as a whole is the conflict between Menelaus and Antilochus over the trick perpetuated by the latter during the competition. Nestor's magnificent speech about the power of *mētis*, 'cunning', which he addresses to his son before the race; Antilochus' youthful recklessness and the anger of Menelaus; the younger man's apology and the eventual reconciliation between the two—all these turn the Menelaus-Antilochus encounter into the highpoint of the Games and one of

²⁰ Lowenstam 1997, 28; cf. Lowenstam 2008, 174; Jensen 2011, 238. See also Nagy 1996, 110, prompted by Lowenstam's earlier publications: 'Significant variations of Homeric themes in the iconographical evidence of vase paintings—especially variations of "Iliadic" themes—persist until around 530 B.C.E.'.

²¹ Cf. Wachter 1991, 96–97: 'In labelling the two losers of the race the painter obviously ran out of imagination, and gave them any "horsey names" (i.e. a kind of speaking names). But it is equally possible that by the moment when the François Vase was produced these 'horsey names' had already been present in a traditional variant of Patroclus' funeral games.

the more memorable episodes in the entire *Iliad*. It is highly unlikely that a painter acquainted with the *Iliad* could forget this episode or prefer to replace its protagonists with Odysseus and Automedon or moreover with Hippothoon and Damasippos. As Rudolf Wachter put it,

But the Homeric account both in the race and in the disputes afterwards contains such unforgettably amusing scenes which mainly concern the other competitors (Eumelos, Menelaos, Antilochos, Meriones), that there is hardly any excuse: this writer did not know Homer's book 23.²²

If we take into account that Patroclus' funeral games is a peculiarly Iliadic theme and therefore cannot be accounted for as yet another instance of early popularity of the Cycle subjects, it would be hard to avoid the conclusion that the treatment of chariot race by the painter of the François Vase could only reflect a different Iliadic tradition. As it happens, this tradition had been present in Athens even before the Panathenaic festival was established.²³ This can only mean that, whether or not previously fixed in writing, the pre-Panathenaic Homer was still a fluid one.²⁴

3

Let us return now to the two scenarios introduced at the beginning of this chapter. According to the first scenario, our text of Homer was fixed in Ionia in the mid-eighth century BCE, and in the late sixth century was either transferred to or copied in Pisistratean Athens, to serve as the basis for the Panathenaic performance. The *sine qua non* of this scenario is the preservation of the text in its pristine form, that is, exactly as it had been fixed in Ionia two centuries before. The reason is obvious: a traditional text cannot pass through the chain of performance and stay unchanged unless it had been fixed in either written or oral form.²⁵ This is why, according to the principle formulated by Adam Parry, our

²² Wachter 1991, 97.

²³ As Frame 2009, 583–84 points out, the Homeric poems must have reached Athens, an Ionian city, 'almost immediately after they took root on Chios'. Obviously, this would also be true of the Homeric tradition as such.

²⁴ On the argument that fixation of a traditional poem in writing does not necessarily eliminate its fluidity see above, ch. 26, 314–15 and below, with n. 29.

²⁵ Contrary to what many are inclined to believe, the option of oral fixation should not be automatically discarded. As comparison with the ancient Near East shows, in the case of texts that were held in especially high esteem, as, e.g., the Vedas or the Avesta, memorization often was a

'Homer' could only have been the last poet in the chain of transmission, that is, the one whose performance was fixed in writing.²⁶ This principle has been further corroborated in an important study recently published by Jonathan Ready. Proceeding from the evidence of fieldwork experience, Ready has demonstrated that the textualization of an oral performance should be regarded as a co-production of the bard, the scribe, and the textualizer ('the collector'), each contributing in his own way to the formation of the final text, and therefore as a unique event.²⁷

However, as both the late appearance of Homeric themes in vase-painting and the existence of pre-Panathenaic iconographical variants demonstrate, even if an Ionian version of the Homeric poems had been fixed as early as the eighth century BCE, it did not become authoritative, so much so that it had to compete with alternative versions of the same tradition as late as the sixth century BCE. To be sure, some allowance should be made for the duration of the process of reception: thus, as both literary and iconographical evidence indicates, the Panathenaic text of Homer did not become authoritative till the middle of the fifth century BCE.²⁸ Nevertheless, a two-hundred-year margin (or even a three-hundred-year one, if the reception of the Panathenaic text is also taken into account) still seems too wide. Rather than Homer, it would suit the reception history of the Cycle poems, which were transmitted in different versions till late antiquity without ever reaching canonical status.²⁹ All these make the standard eighth-century dating of Homer highly questionable.

At first sight, the second scenario, the one which associates the creation of the standardized text of the Homeric poems with the Panathenaic festival, fares better. The late emergence of the peculiarly Homeric themes in vase-painting fits in well with the hypothesis 'that', in Minna Skafte Jensen's words,

the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were recorded in writing in connection with one of the Greater Panathenaea during the rule of the Pisistratids, that the singer who had won first prize in the competition was afterwards engaged to dictate his successful song to the tyrants' scribe, and that this was when the *Iliad* was born.³⁰

standard model of transmission: see Shaked 2003, 65–66. Cf. also Cassio 2002, 114: 'Oral fixation may have been more of a reality than those who live in a literate society are prepared to believe'.

²⁶ A. Parry 1966; cf. M. West 2001, 3 with n. 1; Jensen 2011, 245–46.

²⁷ This would especially be true of the period that preceded the emergence of the contemporary attitude to the recording of oral dictated texts as triggered by Parry-Lord theory of oral composition. See Ready 2015; cf. Jensen 2011, 228–29.

²⁸ Lowenstam 1997, 39–49 and 2008, 9.

²⁹ On the multiformity of the Cycle poems see above, ch. 26.

³⁰ Jensen 2011, 295.

Furthermore, the later dating would easily accommodate the existence of pre-Panathenaic variants through approaching them as raw material, as it were, out of which the Panathenaic text of Homer was created. Small wonder, therefore, that the scholars who proceed from the evidence supplied by the vases are often inclined to favour the sixth-century dating of Homer.³¹

Yet, it should not be forgotten that the iconographical evidence is not the only kind of evidence we should take into account. In a series of historical and philological arguments, Albio Cesare Cassio has built a strong case in support of the view that a fixed text of Homer existed even before the establishment of the Panathenaic competition. Firstly, Cassio refers to the evidence of Aristotle (*Rhet.* 1375b30) to the effect that the Ajax entry in the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.557–58) had been used by the Athenians against the Megarians in an arbitration over Salamis that had taken place in 560 BCE, several decades before the Panathenaic regulation was established. Secondly, he argues convincingly that the famous interpolation in the Nekyia (*Od.* 11.601–26), which inconsistently ascribes divine status to Heracles, goes back to the time of the Pisistratids, and therefore presupposes the existence of a written text.³² Thirdly and most importantly, he draws attention to the fact that Theagenes of Rhegium, who was active in the 520s, that is, during the very period when the Panathenaic regulation was established, wrote an allegorical commentary on the Theomachy, the Battle of the Gods in Books 20 and 21 of the *Iliad*. ‘Incidentally’, Cassio remarks, ‘are we to believe that Theagenes had to go to Athens in order to obtain the earliest available copies?’³³ I would add that the tradition of the Pisistratean Recension itself presupposes the existence of a fixed text, which should serve as a caveat to those who argue in favour of the sixth-century dating on the basis of this tradition.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that Janko’s linguistic arguments in favour of the higher dating have never been disproved, at least not from the perspective of relative chronology. This would mean that, in order to place Homer in the late sixth century BCE, one has to give a satisfactory answer to the following problem raised by Janko:

... if the artistic or historical evidence for the date of Homer did point decisively to the seventh or sixth century, then Hesiod would have to be later still by some margin or other.³⁴

³¹ Notably, Lowenstam in his posthumously published book, see Lowenstam 2008, 4–5; see also Jensen 2011, 244, on vase-painting as supporting the sixth-century dating.

³² Cassio 2002, 115–16. On the Ajax entry in the Catalogue of Ships see also above, ch. 25.

³³ Cassio 2002, 119. On Theagenes of Rhegium see above, ch. 27, 327 and ch. 30, 356.

³⁴ Janko 2012, 37.

As we have seen, the artistic evidence does point decisively to a later date than the eighth century BCE. At the same time, the margin that the late sixth-century dating allows for Hesiod is certainly too narrow to comply with the linguistic data assembled by Janko. That is to say, if we place the textualization of the *Iliad* in the 520s, no timespan will be left to accommodate the *Odyssey*, Hesiod and the Hymns, all of them postdating the *Iliad* in terms of relative chronology.

Neither of the two scenarios purporting to account for the emergence of the standard text of the Homeric poems can thus be fully substantiated by extant evidence. While the widespread view according to which the composition of the Homeric poems should be placed in the eighth century BCE is at variance with the iconographical evidence, the linguistic and historical evidence do not support the late-sixth-century dating. This is not yet to say that nothing has changed since the impasse between the two alternative datings was registered by Sealey sixty years ago. Due to the new evidence that accumulated in recent decades, as well as to fresh assessments of the already existing data, an additional date has emerged, the one placing the composition of the Homeric poems in the mid-seventh century BCE.

As we have seen, the seventh-century dating not only agrees with the iconographical evidence but in fact is directly suggested by it. It is true, of course, that, taken by itself, the iconographical evidence does not presuppose the existence of a fixed text (note again the evidence of the early-sixth-century iconographical variants), but, as we have seen, the presence of such a text is unambiguously required by literary and historical sources at our disposal. Furthermore, placing Homer in the seventh rather than the eighth century BCE creates an unbroken continuity of diffusion of the Homeric tradition from the seventh-century Ionia to the sixth-century Athens and allows for a much more realistic timespan for this tradition to become influential. Last but not least, it allows for a considerably wider margin for accommodating linguistic evidence as regards the relative chronology of the early hexameter poetry. This is not to say, of course, that the pendulum will not swing back in the future as a result of an influx of new information. In the present state of our knowledge, however, the mid-seventh century date for the composition of the *Iliad* emerges as a more robust scenario than either the mid-eighth-century or the late-sixth-century one.

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